

The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain

La nouvelle
tactique des
islamistes

Voir page 8

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RESOLUTE
POWER

Cabinet reshuffle expected by March

AMMAN (Star)—A cabinet reshuffle may take place after 19 March when the final ordinary session of the current Lower House finishes, according to official sources.

This will allow Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti to introduce a ministerial crew that can make preparations for and oversee the November parliamentary elections.

Well-informed sources said the reshuffle will involve between 8 to 10 ministerial portfolios, as some ministers are expected to resign to prepare themselves for the House elections. Other changes are also anticipated in certain ministries.

Observers indicate that the issue of a cabinet reshuffle was the focus of recent discussions between His Majesty Hussein and Mr. Kabariti during the King's latest tour of European countries.

Earlier, there were contacts on the matter during Ramadan between Kabariti and some political activists, among them members from the Islamic Action Front (IAF), to examine their view points on certain matters and clarify their stand during the coming stage.

But Kabariti failed to convince the Islamists to join his cabinet, since the IAF's Shura Council has voted to reject the IAF's participation in the government in this stage of time.

The possibility of extending the current session of Lower House or convene an extraordinary session has been dispelled.

Such a possibility was strong earlier in the month when observers believed the government needed more time to pass laws through Parliament especially those pertaining to economic reform.

But during a meeting between the King and some journalists two weeks ago, it was made clear that the November elections will be held on time. The King also renewed his support of the Prime Minister and his government.

Talk of a government reshuffle is attracting interest especially among deputies and within centrist political parties. Mr. Kabariti formed his gov-

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Islamists divided over joining government

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

THOSE WATCHING closely the Islamist movement in Jordan believe a reform faction is actively working to restructure the movement from inside.

The trend is led by prominent Islamist figures, including Lower House deputies Abdallah Al Akaleh and Bassam Al Umoush, in addition to Abdallah Al Ukour, deputy overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood. They believe that the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, should be independent from the movement. Such an approach, reformers believe, will help the IAF party to move towards a more political rather than a religious platform. Their final goal is to pave the road for the party to ally itself with the government, and participate in the decision making process, which they believe serves the interest of the people and movement.

However, the reformers are going into a head-on collision course with hardliners who have rejected their approach. The hardliners, mostly in the Muslim Brotherhood, adhere to a *fatwa*, declared one year and half ago by Dr. Mohamad Abu Faris, which forbids participation in the government. Abu Faris, a former deputy and a high ranking leader to the Islamist movement, based his *fatwa* on the premise that "the Jordanian government is not ruling according to Islamic doctrine."

But the reformers are not surrendering. They promised to fight for their beliefs, but, within the framework of the movement's united body.

In a show of strength, the Islamist reformers carried the battle to the press, by leaking the working papers of Al Akaleh and Al Umoush which were presented during a close-door conference of the Muslim Brotherhood. The papers asked the movement to participate in the coming government reshuffle.

It was an opportunity for the government to recruit moderate Islamist figures in the planned reshuffle. Press reports talked about an initial deal which was drafted between Prime Minister Abdel Karim Al Kabariti and Al Akaleh earlier this month in which the premier promised to give the Islamists five posts in the coming reshuffle. According to informed sources, hardliners in the Shura Council of the movement intervened to interrupt the negotiations. It was reported that leaders of the movement appealed personally to His Majesty King Hussein to interfere to postpone negotiations on the Islamic participation.

Later on, Kabariti told Islamic reformers he can include them without the movement's approval.

Observers said it is in the interest of the government to bring the Islamists within its ranks. First, this will disrupt the opposition camp which the Islamists are leading, and then it will achieve an old ambition of the political system to change the Islamic movement to a political party which would participate in the decision making process.

The government's goal is to bring the movement out of the theological wilderness and into political realities. But so far, the Muslim Brotherhood appears to have made headway with its efforts to save the movement from breaking apart. In a statement the movement's Shura Council declared that "it is not the right time to participate in the government."

"We believe that it does not serve the interests of Al Jama'a (movement) and the country [for us] to participate in the government at this period of time," Dr. Abdel Majeed Thunibat, the Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement told *The Star* on Monday. It would be difficult for the movement to explain its position if it joins the same government which it had



All those in favor raise their hands

Continued on page 2



His Majesty King Hussein is received by King Hassan II upon his arrival in Rabat on Tuesday. The King arrived in Morocco after ending a diplomatic tour to Europe which took him to Britain and Germany. King Hussein met with British Prime Minister John Major in London and met with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn. He emphasized the important role which these countries could play in the Middle East peace process. He stressed the need to resume the Syrian-Israeli peace talks. The King's talks also covered bilateral relations with each of these countries.

Syria continues to exert influence in Lebanon

By John Daniszewski

BEIRUT—Charming neighborhoods and inviting restaurants sprout like crocuses in spring around sophisticated postwar Beirut, and so it was amid the tinkling of crystal and china that the young man told how his father was taken away.

His father was a prominent political activist. One day in 1994, Lebanese soldiers came to their home and took the father to the top Syrian official in Beirut, the man some dissidents call Lebanon's "gauleiter"—the German word used in the Nazi era for a party functionary serving as a provincial governor.

The father was interviewed by his host, given coffee and then whisked away to prison in Damascus. There he remains, not charged with a crime, but not permitted to go home.

Human rights advocates estimate that more than 100 Lebanese have been arrested in Lebanon and put in prison in Syria—a stark reminder of the quiet but effective ways that Syria's authoritarian government exercises control over Lebanon, its smaller neighbor.



Syrian soldiers in Lebanon: Big brother?

"In the past, we used to have masks. Now we have taken off our masks," said a former Lebanese diplomat now in Beirut, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Everyone knows that Syria controls everything in Lebanon, totally."

Since this nation's civil war finally quieted in 1991, the United States and the Arab world seemingly have

acquiesced to the Syrian overlordship in Lebanon, apparently recognizing it as a necessary evil to end the 16 years of

Continued on page 2

UN appeals for \$120 million for emergency assistance to Sudan

NEW YORK—As hostilities increase in the Sudan, the United Nations appealed this week for \$120.8 million to meet the emergency humanitarian needs of the estimated 4.2 million war-affected and displaced persons there.

Reports say most of those affected are struggling to cope with chronic malnutrition and the alarming increase of infectious diseases. Persistent insecurity combined with natural disasters, including crop failures and floods in the Sudan, have worsened the plight of almost all vulnerable groups who are already living below subsistence levels.

The largest request is from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) which requires more than \$46 million to help

improve the health, nutrition and overall household food security of the war's main victims—women, children and the elderly.

The World Food Program (WFP) is requesting \$43.1 million for food aid, and its transport and handling costs, in order to feed 2.6 million people this year, an increase of 500,000 over last year. This total comprises 2.2 million people in southern Sudan, 374,000 in the transitional zone between northern and southern Sudan and 78,000 in the greater Khartoum area.

At present, some 4.2 million people (3.4 million in the southern states; 445,000 in the transitional zone and 395,000 in greater Khartoum) will require assistance in the form

of medical and health care, basic education, emergency shelter, as well as agriculture, livestock and fishing inputs.

The most severely affected regions in the Sudan are parts of Bahr Al-Ghazal, Jonglei and Upper Nile. Some of the country's highest malnutrition rates are being registered by aid workers in northern Bahr Al-Ghazal. Other vulnerable areas include the camps and settlements around Khartoum, where an estimated 1.8 million internally displaced Sudanese struggle to eke out a living.

The Sudan is estimated to have the highest number of internally displaced persons in the world, with as many as 4 million people, of which 80 per

Continued on page 2

Cultural Agenda

Exhibitions

■ Contemporary Arab Artists. The new collection, at the Darat Al Funun, continues till 27 February.

■ Works by Amanda Shihadeh at the French Cultural Center, continues till 6 March.

■ Works by children submitted to the Second Art Competition for Children at the Goethe Institute, 24 February, at 5:00 pm.

■ Ceramic and plastic art, at the city Hall at Ras El Ein till the end of this month.

■ Works by Rajaa al Qudah at the Royal Cultural Center ends today.

■ Works by Nazihah Salim at Al Mashreq showroom, Shmeisani, continues till 28 February.

■ Mini Bazaar and open house at Um El Kundum, off the airport highway, Friday 21 February from 11:00 am till 5:00 pm.

Films

■ *Regarde Les Home Toumbre* at the French Cultural Center, 24 February, at 8:30 pm.

■ *Malcolmu X* at the American Center, today at 5:00 pm.

■ *Glory* at the American Center, 27 February at 5:00 pm.

■ *A Room with a View*, at the British Council, 25 February at 6:00 pm.

■ *The Slow Morris* (Making Friends), at the British Council, 26 February, at 5:00 pm.



Black History Month at the American Center

Lectures and workshops

■ French singer Francoise LeGolian will speak about her experience on 23 February, at 8:00 pm at the French Cultural Center.

■ Workshop On French Engineering and Hotel Equipment opens 22 February at Philadelphia hotel, at 10 am and runs till 24 February.

■ Fantasy and Magic Realism. The new literature series will start on 23 February at the British Council with four consecutive parts every Monday at 6 pm.

■ Worldnet Dialogue with African American women who

are successful in the fields of media, art, cinema, government and business. The program is scheduled for 25 February at 4:30 pm at the American Center auditorium.

■ The Media Forum topic of the American Center for this month will be "Press Freedom and the Law". The program is in Arabic. It will be held at the USIS Auditorium on 26 February.

■ Telepress conference with African American writer Eleni Featherston, Author of "Skin Deep" will be conducted at the end of February.

■ The Turkish cultural center is running currently Turkish courses and special sewing lessons.

Concerts

■ Performance by Francoise Legolian, at the Royal Cultural Center, 26 February, at 8:30 pm.

Plays

■ Muwaten Hasah Al Talah "Custom-Made Citizen" starring Musa Hijazoon daily at the Concord theater at 8:30 pm.

■ Hukumah Khams Nujoom (Five-Star Government) by Mukhlid Al Zyoudi daily at Amoun theater at 8:30 pm.

■ Akh Ya Disky (Oh My Back) by Nader Imran, daily at Nabeel Al Mashiny Theater at 8:30 pm.

Weather Outlook

● A cold air mass, originating from Central Europe, is expected to affect the Kingdom on Thursday. It will be partly cloudy to cloudy and rain is expected especially in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom and the mountainous areas. Temperatures will drop with the minimum reaching 1 degree in Amman. The depression will ease by Saturday evening.

in the country within a month. Al Umairi, board is Hattar and founder of the Security Council will be the chair.

Beware
■ A blacklisted participant in January.
Sources on blacklist is politicians, the opening those who fair.
The Israeli 4000 protesters convened, professional.
The Jordanian established a government will release the fair.

Bad harvest
■ The decision last month in the three as a result of January, according Society for 53 newspapers.
On December publishers of consumer.
The study decision to increase in that the timing.
That the

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Jordan to host Abu Marzouk

Official sources said that a team from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States led by director Louis Freeh is expected to arrive in Amman today, Thursday, to discuss with Jordanian officials the case of Dr. Musa Abu Marzouk, the head of the Politburo of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) who was arrested in the US in mid-1995. The team visited Israel on Monday and discussed with Israeli officials the issue of extraditing the jailed Hamas leader.



Abu Marzouk

Israel accuses him of being behind suicide attacks against Israelis last year, and, until recently, was demanding his extradition from the US.

Last month, Abu Marzouk reneged on his legal challenge to the Israeli request before US courts and agreed to be sent to Israel. But media sources now say Israel is fearing a backlash from Hamas and other organizations if Abu Marzouk is sent to Israel.

His Majesty King Hussein is said to be willing to discuss the fate of the Palestinian leader when he meets US officials next month. Sources said that Abu Marzouk may be sent to Jordan instead. Ibrahim Ghosheh, the spokesman of Hamas, welcomed these reports and hoped that the process will be carried out as soon as possible.

On the other hand, officials in Amman confirmed that there are Jordanian efforts to free Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen, who is currently serving a life sentence in an Israeli prison. He is said to be in bad health and Israel is considering his release.

Surprise, coming from Kuwait

Minister of Justice Abdel Karim Al Dughmi is optimistic about the prospects of an early release of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait.

In an interview with JTV recently he said that a pleasant surprise is underway concerning the fate of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait. He added extensive diplomatic efforts took place after reports that Jordanian prisoners were subjected to beating by the Kuwaiti security forces last January. Al Dughmi expressed optimism over statements by Kuwaiti officials in this regard.

He said that he contacted Kuwaiti officials lately who confirmed that the Jordanian prisoners are in good condition. He hoped efforts will culminate in the immediate release of prisoners.

According to official Kuwaiti sources, the prisoners were set to be released by the Kuwaiti authorities on the first day of Eid Al Fitr two weeks ago. There are at least 35 Jordanian prisoners who were convicted by the state security court in Kuwait for their alleged "collaboration" with Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait in 1990-91.

Parties line up in favor of Syria

Jordanian opposition parties are planning to hold a festival showing their solidarity with Syria. The festival will be held on the 22nd of this month to express support of Syrian stands regarding the peace process.

Saeed Thiab, the [periodic] president of Jordanian opposition [coalition] parties, said that the parties have already submitted an official request to the Governor of Amman, Tal'at Al Nawasch, to receive a permit to hold the festival.

Thiab said that the festival aims at supporting the Syrian stand in confronting Israeli pressures imposed on Syria.

The 12 professional associations together with other popular unions and independent figures will participate in the event.

Opposition parties paid visits to Syria several times, the latest of which took place last month by the Islamic Action Front.

Al Mithaq licensed at last

A new member to the weekly press congregation is now assured after it was given a go-ahead signal by the high court this week. The Supreme Court overruled a government ban on granting a license for Al Mithaq (covenant) weekly.

Al Mithaq was denied a license by the government in July last year. The government at that time based its refusal on the title of the paper.

Al Wihdat Press and Publication Company filed a license request for the newspaper to the Cabinet in July last year, but the request was rejected.

After the new Supreme Court verdict, Al Mithaq will join about 20 weeklies existing in the country. The paper is expected to go on the newsstands within a month.

Al Mithaq is expected to be controversial as its editorial board is headed by Nahed Hattar, an ultra-nationalist figure. Hattar and his colleague Abdullah Abu Rumman, another founder of the paper, are standing for a trial at the State Security Court on charges of *lese-majeste*. Rakan Al Saadeh will be the editor-in-chief.

Beware of the Blacklist

A blacklist is soon to be released against those who participated in the Israeli trade fair which was held last January.

Sources of the Jordanian opposition parties said that a long blacklist is being completed which includes a number of politicians, businessmen and journalists who participated in the opening of the fair and promoting it. Included are also those who violated the "national consensus" to boycott the fair.

The Israeli trade fair was faced by public anger. More than 4000 protesters held a sit-in near the place where the fair was convened. Protesters represented 18 political parties, 12 professional associations and other popular unions.

The Jordanian popular, political and economic institutions established a national committee to impose pressure on the government to cancel the fair. The committee warned that it will release a blacklist against those who have any relation to the fair.

Bad harvest in the dailies' circulations

The decision of daily newspapers to hike their cover price last month has affected their circulation, a study proved. Sales of the three Arabic daily newspapers dropped by 23.48 percent as a result of raising their prices from 150 fils to 200 fils on 1 January, according to a study conducted by the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP). The study covered 53 newspaper outlets in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid.

On December the NSCP opposed the hike and accused publishers of the dailies of seeking profits at the expense of the consumer.

The study said that Jordanians feel unhappy and view the decision to rise the prices as unjustified. As a result of the increase in the cost of living in the country, the study added that the timing of the hike was inappropriate.

That there was no reason to raise the prices of newspapers as long as the prices of other materials used in the industry remained unchanged, the NSCP charged.

Prince Hassan briefs cabinet on European talks

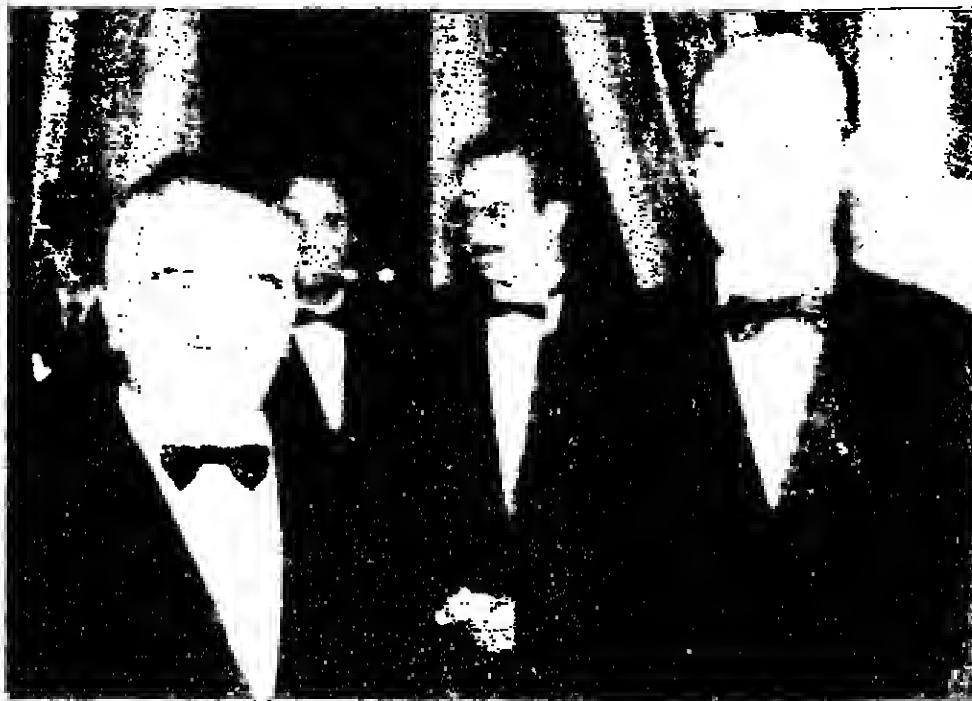
AMMAN—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, met early this week Acting Prime Minister Dr. Abdullah Nsour, and headed part of the cabinet's session, in which he reviewed the results of his successful visits to France and Switzerland. The Prince was accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Bin Al Hussein and Prince Raad Ben Zeid Chief Chamberlain.

Prince Hassan said that his meetings with the French president, the president of the Swiss Federation, and senior officials in both countries concentrated on three main issues including the peace process, Jerusalem, the European Mediterranean dialogue, and economic relations between Jordan and the European countries on one hand and with the EC on the other, in addition to Jordan's stands regarding different international and regional issues.

He discussed with French officials the peace process, the issue of Jerusalem, Iraq in addition to efforts exerted to conclude the agreement of partnership with the European Union. He pointed to the positive results of the restructuring of the Jordanian economy, and the peace agreement with Israel.

The Crown Prince called on the French side to develop a new long range strategy in certain investment spheres in Jordan including communications, energy, the Dead Sea projects, and cement.

The cabinet session focused on the economic situation and accomplishments achieved in increasing production and exports, dealing with unemployment, in addition to the economic working plan for the next stage. The Prince pointed to the negative impact of inaccurate or exaggerated media coverage of economic issues on Jordan's reputation abroad. He



Prince Hassan with French Prime Minister Alain Juppé in Paris

stressed need to adhere to accuracy and give a positive picture of the country.

After the session, Prince Hassan told reporters that Jordan is about to reap the benefit of its political and economic policies especially in working closely with the European Community. He pointed to the decision of the International Monetary Fund to grant Jordan \$52 million. Prince Hassan estimated the total volume of direct foreign investments for the next five years to reach \$5 billion.

"In the political dimension, our move in France, in the EC, and in a monopol world was and will remain dependent on the American move, yet the EC is really ready to cooperate with the issues of justice in this region, particularly the issues of Jerusalem, the refugees, and

the free trade," Prince Hassan said.

He referred to the resumption within days of the Jordanian Palestinian talks regarding free trade that would put an end to the anxieties of economic dependency, eliminate barriers, and broaden the market through wider dealing "that would attract greater investments to a greater market which would bring the Jordanian, Palestinian, Egyptian and pan Arab dimensions closer to the world economies."

Concerning Jerusalem, Prince Hassan said that "the other side has spoken about Jerusalem before leaving to Washington as the eternal capital of Israel... yet I confirmed during my latest visit our stand and the stand of the international community since

1967...the annexation is invalid and cancelled in the international legality viewpoint."

Prince Hassan called for the next millennium to be an occasion of participation of all religions, not merely celebrating a great historic event. "This participation means naturally Jerusalem with an Arab identity and existence."

The Crown Prince added that the French stand is in agreement with international legality. Responding to a question concerning Iraq, he said that "our stand is very clear. We call for the international legality to be applied equally, yet we wonder, as we meet with the officials in Europe and USA or anywhere else is there any strategic focus to deal with this part of the world, or have we to continue the dual relations each by himself?"

Jordanians and Palestinians mourn late Baker

AMMAN (Star)—Jordanians and Palestinians mourned the death of Ibrahim Baker, one of the prominent Palestinian politicians and legal authorities and a figurehead in the Palestinian national movement, who passed away on Saturday, at the age of 73, after a four-year battle with cancer.



Baker

Baker spent his life defending Palestinian right to establish an independent homeland. He was a member of the Palestine National Council in exile (PLO's highest body) since 1968. In 1969, he worked for seven months as the vice chairman of the executive committee of the PLO. He also served as a member of the executive committee of the organization, and was a member of the Palestinian Central Council. But in recent years, Baker became a strong critic of Chairman Arafat and the Oslo agreement.

He was born in the town of Mazrah in the north of Palestine in 1924. He obtained his law degree from the Law Institute in Jerusalem in 1950 and a diploma in law from the same institute in 1952.

Baker began his training in Jordan as a lawyer in 1950 and became a member of Jordan Lawyers Association (JLA) in 1952. Baker lived in Jerusalem and Ramallah after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. He led the lawyers' strike in the West Bank protesting the annexation of Arab Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1967. He was later expelled by the Israelis.

He was elected for two consecutive terms as president of JLA, 1977-79 and 1979-81.

His Majesty King Hussein assigned Baker to be a member of the Royal Commission for Drafting the National Charter.

The late Baker wrote several books in both the judicial and political fields. His political books focussed on the Palestinian people's right to return and to establish their independent state. He also wrote books refuting Israeli claims, like his latest book about the Madrid peace conference and the direct peace negotiations with the Israelis.

On the judicial level he focused on human rights in Jordan and on the issue of Palestinian human rights. He was considered as a reference for many lawyers on controversial issues, either constitutional or legal.

He became a victim of cancer by the end of 1992. In 1993, he travelled to the United States for medical treatment.

He was buried last Sunday at Sahab cemetery in a funeral attended by Jordanian and Palestinian officials and popular figures. His Royal Highness Prince Hassan visited Baker's house to pay his condolences.

Cabinet reshuffle expected by March

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government will appeal to His Majesty King Hussein to form a national committee to draft a new legislation for the coming parliamentary elections to be held November this year.

Political observers believe the upcoming elections will prove to be crucial for Jordan. The current Parliament has been as unpopular as the government among most Jordanians who believe the deputies has failed to confront the government on issues related to the economy, unemployment, cost of living among others. Peace with Israel remains a controversial issue for some Jordanians and will figure again in the November elections.

Official sources said that the

Israel reaps fruits of trade agreement with Jordan

THE volume of trade between Jordan and Israel in the second half of last year reached \$18 million, according to a study issued by the Israeli embassy in Amman.

Since the trade exchange protocol went into effect in June 1996 and until December 1996, Jordan exports reached \$5,941,750. In return, Jordan's imports from Israel reached \$11,808,160. These imports included equipment, foodstuffs and agricultural products.

The study added that 250,000 Israeli tourists visited Jordan during 1996, compared with less than 70,000 Jordanians who visited Israel in the same time. About 182,000 Israelis came to Jordan through Sheikh Hussein Bridge (northern borders), while 60,000 visitors passed via Araba Valley in the south.

More than 66,000 visited Israel through the northern crossing point while 1425 crossed the southern borders, the study said.

During the same year, 59,236 foreign tourists arrived in Jordan from Israel via Sheikh Hussein Bridge, and 17,586 via Araba Valley.

The King Hussein Bridge, which is on the borders between Jordan and Palestine National Authority (the West Bank) was the crossing point of 70,792 Palestinians and Arabs who visited Jordan in the same period.



Hijazen and Uthman Al Shamaileh in a scene from the play.

'Muwaten Hasab Al Talab' Satirical comedy with bitter ending

Amman (Star)—The Jordanian theater is showing increasing boldness and sophistication by being increasingly critical of the performance of both government and deputies. Apart from the pioneering Nabeel and Hisham satirical TV Program *Ahlan Hukunah*, which angered some deputies and officials, another performance has popped up recently on the scene to create controversy.

Muwaten Hasab Al Talab (Custom-Made Citizen), a play directed by Muhammad Al Shawaqleh, has lately waged a war against the policies of Kabarti government going so far as to criticize him personally. The hike in the prices of bread, which led to the riots in the south last August, was the center of criticism.

In the leading role is the popular actor Musa Hijazen, who highlights the impact of the political status quo on the Jordanian public.

Hijazen, who is known to Jordanians as Suma, the naive coffee-shop waiter in the *Haret Abu Awad* TV series, is showing another side in his character in the latest role. The political message the play is trying to convey is realized through Suma's relation with the customers of his coffee-shop.

Other characters depicted in the play are the partisan who keeps reminding others of party dogma and political theories, the unemployed university graduate, the deputy who never questions the performance of the government and the pensioner who, by showing hypocrisy to the government, is appointed a general manager in one of the public companies.

Despite the fact that such characters have been portrayed in more than one play in the past, they are presented in a different angle in this latest work. "The play is based mainly on the 'bread revolt' in the south which erupted after the hikes in the bread prices last August," said Al Shawaqleh. He went on to say that the south riots are now part of people's heritage which the play presents and that it is not only the government which has the right to talk about it.

The actors attempt to chronicle for the bread revolt since its inception and ending with the government's promises to compensate people for the losses.

At one point Suma hangs a picture of the Prime Minister on the wall of his coffee-shop and starts addressing him in a "southern dialect" as the "father" in reference to Kabarti's speech in Parliament in which he said that he considered himself as the father of all Jordanians in recognition of his responsibilities.

The play achieves a climax when Suma, who is unable to change the status quo, commits suicide using the same knife that was used to slaughter sheep killed for a feast to welcoming the Prime Minister in the neighborhood.

The play was well received by critics and commentators.

Children art exhibit to take place at Goethe Institute


THE POLISH Embassy and the Goethe Institute are organizing on 24 February an exhibition of drawings by children submitted to the Second Art Competition for Children. A total of 100 children will display their works.

The competition was announced for jointly by the Polish Embassy, the Goethe Institute and the Polish Women's Club in December 1996. The subjects the children were requested to draw about are the "My Dream World" and "The Country of My Parents".

The children participating in the competition aged between four and eighteen years. A Jury comprised of Jordanian and Polish artists and educationalists awarded prizes for 22 works.

All the works were unique and interesting and reflected children's memories, dreams and feelings. Special diplomas were awarded to the winners of the first, second and third positions in four age groups.

The main purpose of the contest is to enable children to show their abilities, to create some artistic atmosphere that will spread the awareness of the importance of art in children's lives.




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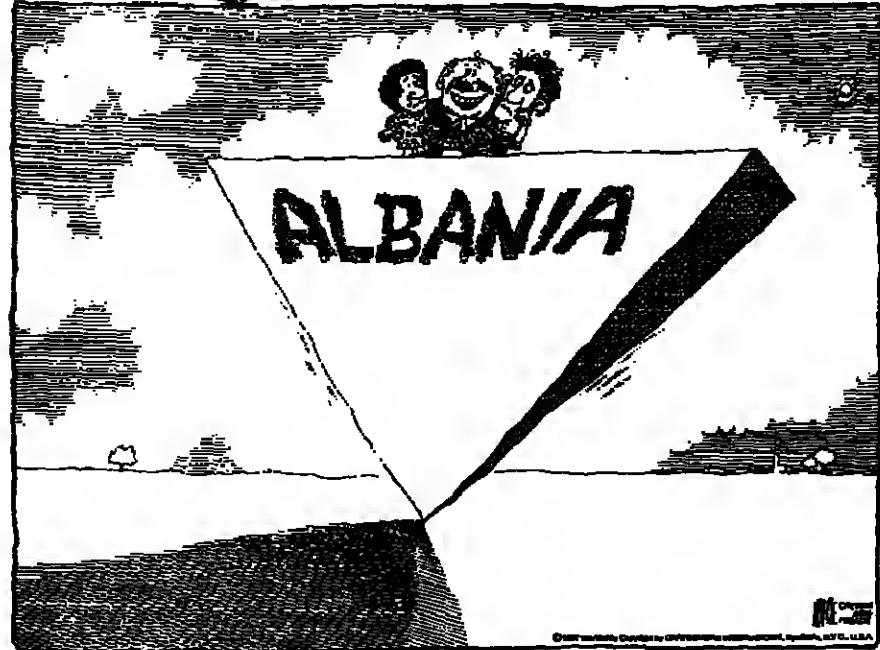


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Our Say...

The battle for Jerusalem

JORDANIAN DIPLOMATIC efforts have intensified in the past few weeks in the wake of the resumption of the peace process following the signing of the Hebron deal between Israel and the Palestinians.

The European tours by His Majesty King Hussein and before His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan successfully underlined the main issues that the international community and parties to the Middle East peace process will be addressing in the coming phase.

Topping these issues is the question of Jerusalem and Israel's occupation of its eastern part since 1967. Prince Hassan's Paris statements about the illegality of Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem came to highlight a fundamental fact that governs the final status negotiations over the future of the city which are to begin soon.

Following Prince Hassan's statements, the King, on a visit to Morocco this week reiterated, along with King Hassan II, that the holy city is in fact an occupied Arab territory which cannot be excluded from international laws. The two leaders also stressed the need to preserve the Arab identity of Jerusalem until its future is discussed in the final status stage.

The timing of the Jordanian efforts was deliberate. Now that the Hebron deal is behind us and the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators are preparing to set the agenda for the final status talks, the issue of Jerusalem becomes the most hotly-contested issue. Upon returning from his US visit, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is said to be maneuvering again to appease his right-wing backers. In few days he promised to give his decision on whether he will allow the construction of a new Jewish neighborhood in Arab East Jerusalem.

Mr Netanyahu is falling under domestic political pressure this time. His right-wing coalition partners are threatening to withdraw their support of his government if he does not approve the building of the new neighborhood. But he is said to have given his word to President Clinton not to change the status quo in Jerusalem—for the time being.

It is unclear how mounting pressure at home, including a possible incrimination in an ongoing police investigation, will affect Mr Netanyahu. But for Jordan, which understands the dangerous repercussions of allowing the building of a new neighborhood in East Jerusalem on the entire peace process, the issue of Jerusalem is cannot be dealt with unilaterally.

Prince Hassan's remarks on Jerusalem in Paris and later on in Amman summarize the Arab position as well as the legal standpoint on the holy city. Jerusalem is an occupied territory whose future must be decided in accordance with international laws and UN resolutions. It is also an Arab city with a Muslim and Christian heritage and as such its political and religious character cannot be decided by Israel alone.

The next political confrontation will be over Jerusalem. The Arabs must prepare well for the upcoming battle. Jordan is taking the lead so far. Its efforts must not go to waste.

Will Bill Clinton rise to the occasion?

Carrie Nefle Moye
Star US correspondent

THE ACCIDENT over the Northern Galilee earlier this month—the crash of two Israeli helicopters with the death of 73 officers and soldiers—shocked Israel to its marrow, reviving the debate over the usefulness of Israel's presence in southern Lebanon in its self-proclaimed "security zone." Even hard-line military and Likud personalities have gone public in questioning the benefits their country is reaping from this quagmire.

Some of these joined traditional doves in requesting a unilateral withdrawal from South Lebanon. The price in Israeli lives has been too high for the country to accept unquestioningly. The political price for that presence has been even higher, exposing Israel to criticism from both friends and foes. Last year's attack on Qana, which left over 100 civilians dead and many more wounded, not only was a major factor in the defeat of Simon Peres in the election, but marred the country's image and gave others political ammunition. It also led to deep divisions within Israeli society and body politic.

Withdrawal or no withdrawal is a most difficult choice to make for the government, especially under Benjamin Netanyahu, who sees his presence in the security zone as a bargaining chip in any future negotiations with Syria and Lebanon. But this pressure, in itself, also is a strong card in Syria's hand to put pressure on Israel by proxy, namely using the local Hizbollah guerrillas to inflict still more damage on the Israeli occupiers. Syria and Lebanon have grown accustomed to the formula and seem no eager to crave a unilateral withdrawal from South Lebanon unless there is a comprehensive deal that includes withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for peace.

Netanyahu failed to coax France into sending troops to south Lebanon to guard Israel's northern borders if there were a unilateral withdrawal by Israel because France, and Europe in general, favor the com-

prehensive approach of a Syrian-Lebanese deal.

Additionally, France does not appear willing to step into the same quagmire from which Netanyahu is trying to extricate himself.

Netanyahu's visit to Washington last week is crucial in forming new, innovative approaches to tackle the very difficult question of the future of the peace process. In earlier meetings in the capital with the President, the Israeli Prime Minister was in the stronger position: he had just been elected on an ideological platform while his host was in the middle of his re-election campaign, vulnerable to pressures and demands by strong lobbies and power blocks. Now the situation is reversed: the host is beginning his last term in office, free of election pressures and free to take the initiative, placing the interests and principles of the United States in the forefront. The guest is the one un-

der pressure, seeking support and guidance out of a deepening dilemma—not only regarding south Lebanon but regarding the entire future of the peace process.

Now Clinton is in position to state his demands clearly, being the President of the main sponsor of the Madrid Conference of 1990, the leader of the sole super power, and the main ally of Israel. Friends of Israel and supporters of peace in the Middle East are looking for a new, assertive role by Washington to guide the parties to a resumption of talks with the aim of reaching a meaningful agreement that takes into account all parties' legitimate interests and rights: sovereignty, security, reconciliation, peace, and open borders and exchange.

Time in the Middle East is more of an essence now than ever. Many other flash points are looming: Turkey, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Iraq, the

Gulf States, the Balkans... Closing the chapter of the Israeli-Arab conflict with an equitable peace with Syria and Lebanon would greatly facilitate the process of facing the other problems and defusing them. It is the perfect time for the Clinton administration to bridge the 21st century with a resounding victory for peace in the Middle East. Washington knows exactly what is required. The world is waiting for America to take the lead again and do what is necessary to end a most painful chapter in modern history.

The year 1998 will mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli War. It would be fitting to help the peoples of the region attain the gift of peace and reconciliation on this symbolic date.

Furthermore, Syria's President Hafez Al Assad is thought to be in frail health and may not be present long. He is ready for peace and there are many doubts about his succession and the capabilities of his successor(s) to muster the courage and willingness for peace. The example of the reluctance of Simon Peres to continue the path of peace before a new mandate through new elections dealt the peace process an almost fatal blow when he was not elected. This truism, added to other factors in the cobweb of Middle Eastern problems and complexities, should be sufficient proof for all concerned—that the time is imminent.

After these long years, the people of the Holy Land deserve this effort. Forces working against peace, on both sides, are growing stronger daily, particularly as seen in the rise of fanatical fundamentalism on both sides.

The growing potential of the anti-peace countries (Iran, Iraq) and the disenchantment of officials and peoples in the pro-peace camp (Egypt, Jordan, the Gulf States) can tilt the table.

Since the Hebron Accord and the crash of the helicopters, shrouded by other internal developments, Netanyahu appears ready to deal. Will Bill Clinton rise to the occasion? ■



Book Review

'All That Remains': A study of 1948 Palestinian villages

"All That Remains" Edited by Prof. Walid Khalidi.

An introduction by Prof. Walid Khalidi

THIS BOOK is about the fate of the 418 Palestinian villages destroyed and depopulated in the 1948 war, the ineluctable climax of the preceding Zionist colonization and the great watershed in the history of the Palestinian people, marking the beginning of their Exodus and Diaspora.

The loss of these villages was only part of the debris left on Palestinian soil by the advance of Zionism. The other part was the fall of more than a dozen of the major urban centers of the Palestinian people—towns exclusively populated by them (Acre, Beersheba, Bay-san, Lydda, Majdal, Nazareth, al-Ramla), others where they were either the vast majority (Safad) or had substantial pluralities (Tiberias, Haifa, and West Jerusalem), and their ancient seaport Jaffa, where they also made up the vast majority and in whose hinterland they had pioneered the cultivation of the orange that bears the city's name. With few exceptions, notably Nazareth, these urban centers were also emptied of their Palestinian residents. Their immovable assets—commercial centers, residential quarters, schools, banks, hospitals, clinics, mosques, churches, and other public buildings, parks and utilities, all passed en bloc into the possession of the citizens of the nascent State of Israel. Also appropriated intact by Israelis were the personal movable assets: furniture, silver, pictures, carpets, libraries, and heirlooms—all the accoutrements of middle class life of the erstwhile Palestinian residents.

Grievous and irreplaceable as was the loss of these urban centers, their fate is not the subject of this volume, in which only passing reference will be made to them. Instead, this work concentrates on the fate of the Palestinian countryside. The decision to focus on the



418 Palestinian villages destroyed and depopulated in the war of 1948 was deliberate. The fate of the urban centers, at least that of the more major ones, has been noted by the outside world, however perfunctorily. The Palestinian pre-Diaspora structures in many of these centers still stand—the once elegant mansions of the residential quarters of Haifa, Jaffa, and West Jerusalem—while the cities' names, albeit in Hebrewized versions, still grace the modern maps of Israel.

The same cannot be said of the villages. They have remained altogether anonymous to the outside world and might as well never have existed. A dozen or so, though depopulated, were spared or suffered only minor damage. The rest were either totally destroyed or virtually so. They have literally been wiped off the face of the earth. The sites of their destroyed homesteads and graveyards, as well as their orchards, threshing floors, wells, live-

jan/Israeli citizens who never left their homes have been confiscated since 1948 and put at the exclusive disposal of the Jewish citizens of the state.

The District of Baysan

The following are the names of the villages destroyed/ depopulated in the district of Baysan:

Arab al-'Arida, Arab al-Bawad, Arab al-Safa, al-Ashrafyya, al-Bira, Danna, Farwana, al-Fatur, al-Ghazawiyya, al-Hamidiyya, al-Hanna, Jabul, Kaifa, Kawkab, al-Hawa, al-Khunayzir, Masil, al-Jiz, al-Murassas, Qumya, al-Skhiya, al-Samiriyya, Sinn, Tall al-Shawk, al-Taq, al-Tira, Umm 'Ajra, Umm Sabun, Yubla, Zib'a and al-Zawiya. Amongst them these villages had an Arab population in 1945 of over 9000 people and shared an area of 222,000 dunums (dunum=919 sq. meters=0.23 acres) over 74% of which was cultivable and 18.7% of which was Jewish owned. Each of these villages has its own story, following is the story of just one of them.

Qumya (Qumiya)

Land ownership and use in 1944/45 (dunums):
Ownership:
Use:
Arab: 4,716 cultivable 4,319, Jewish: 81 (% of total) (88)
Public: 101 built-up: 15
Total: 4,898
Population: 1931: 386
1944/45: 440
Number of houses (1931): 88

Qumya Before 1948

The village stood on a hill-top. Together with the village of Shatta, it was considered the western gate to the plain of Baysan. The Baysan-Haifa highway passed on the outskirts of the village. In 1936, Qumya fell within the administrative jurisdiction of the Iwa' of Lajjun and was a farm that paid

Middle East Beat

by
Khairi Jambek

Theory of Poverty

IT IS amazing how the civilizational role of Islam, and its presence as a guiding beacon throughout history to enlightenment, renovation and justice, has been reduced by the actions of a minority of zealots, and political opportunists, into a credo that supports violence and degrades the human potential of the average Muslim. How did it happen that a few psychopaths were allowed to appear as the sole representatives of our faith, and even much worse to dictate to us what the nature of Islam is? Those monopolists of violence and terror should only be perceived by their correct image, that is of being terrorists. Regardless of the masked disguise, and irrespective of their political orientation, such terrorists are neither a phenomenon attached to any particular race, nor to any system of belief. What they have in common is their criminality rather than their faith.

Perhaps it is less sensational to call criminals, with the proper adjectives, for the mass media organs, which are mainly responsible for the massacres of words and sentences, have had a long experience in ascribing titles attached to much more sinister claims of ideological conspiracies, than be content with the obvious simple acts of violence. One does not wish to attack the media organs, for they are driven by the profit making ethos, and not by benevolent institutions. Also ratings and competition play an important role in formulating public opinion. The modern history of our world indicates clearly that there could not be a simple act of murder, it had to be the (cosa nostra), the fedayeen, the urban terrorists, and finally religious zealots of all denominations. Yet, irrespective of the epoch and geographical location, when a crime against humanity is committed it should be put in its proper dimension rather than the scale of romanticism and illusions.

Islam is a civilization that had a great contribution to humanity. It is neither confined to any particular socio-economic setup nor to particular locations. To condemn all its achievements, and contribution to science and literature, through the spectrum of ignorance and violence is tantamount to burning witches in the Middle Ages, and destroying books by the Nazis. But when a crime, committed in the name of Islam, is merely a crime committed by one or more criminals, only then we can progress into understanding the Islamic monolith that unites people from all over the world into practicing the five tenets of the faith with goodwill, and respect to all other religions. One does not deny the fact that there are arguments within the so called Islamist grouping, that incites violence and destruction, but alternatively there is always the voice of reason to guide the faithful into the real realms of Islam, those of moderation and respect for life. On such an occasion, the charitable organization in Iran called (Khorad) has raised recently the bounty on Salman Rushdie's head by one half million dollars. Alarm bells were sounded in the world declaring the barbarity of Muslims and the religion of Islam. But has anyone in the world juxtaposed this supposedly Islamic tendency with the charitable call of HRH Crown Prince Hassan for the establishment of an international (Zakat-Alms) fund for the development of Islamic countries? The Prince's call is an act of dignified charity, and Khorad's call is an act of criminality, so why dwell on the negative, and ignore the positive?

It is unacceptable, that our faith should be reduced to a theory for poverty, and those among us, who wish it to be so, are the ones burning Coptic churches and fanning the flames of sectarianism, the poverty of their terrorism will always be exposed. ■



US President Bill Clinton meets with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in the White House last Friday. Mr Clinton said he was hopeful talks on the Israeli-Syrian track would be resumed soon.

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Foreign Exchange

	Buy ID	Sell
US\$	0.7080	0.7120
£	1.1432	1.1472
DM	0.4152	0.4192
Sfr	0.4772	0.4812
FRF	0.1231	0.1271
YEN (100)	0.5678	0.5718
DEL	0.3499	0.3539
LIT (100)	0.0421	0.0461

SATURDAY

General Price Pointer	Trade Volume	Stock Volume	Highest Traded Stocks	Arab Pharmaceutical
▲ Al-Jazeera	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical
▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical	▲ Arab Pharmaceutical

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek
Theory of Poverty

Business scene

Jordan received total loans estimated at JD 151 million during last year, to boost its budget which suffers a deficit of JD 21.6 million.

The external debts of Jordan have gone up in 1995 by 2.9% while last year it only rose by 0.6%.

According to official statistics, the total Arab loans given to Jordan are estimated at JD35.7 million. External loans offered by industrial countries reached JD 3154.7 million, given from Germany, France, Japan, Britain and the US.

Other regional international institutions and banks loaned Jordan JD 1517.4 million, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Arab Monetary Fund and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

The Unified Company for Organizing Land Transport has generated net profits estimated at JD 1,212 million during 1996.

The company's fleet transported more than 6 million tons of various commodities inside and outside Jordan.

It is studying a plan to establish a specialized transport corporation (with limited liability) that owns one hundred trucks. The capital of the proposed corporation is JD5 million, in which the Unified company has a stake of 40%.

The company's cash liquidity in the banks rose by 10% to reach JD5,312 million in 1996 against JD 4,825 million in 1995.

The Jordanian Economic Development and Commercial Centers Co. (JEDCO) has concluded arrangements to participate in the Spring International Trade Expo which is to take place in Dubai between 5-11 March.

About 38 Jordanian industrial companies are taking part in the Expo, which is held annually. Jordanian participation in the Expo is a good opportunity to promote Jordan in all the economic fields particularly the tourism and investment sectors. This will enhance the existence of Jordan's products in the Gulf markets. According to the director of the promotion department in JEDCO, Bashar Al Khasawneh, there is a possibility to set up a permanent centre for Jordanian products (Trade House) in Dubai in co-operation with the private sector there. Dubai market is regarded one of the biggest consuming market with respect to re-export operations to all world continents.

Foreign Exchange		
Wednesday, 19 February		
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1432	1.1489
DM	0.4152	0.4173
FF	0.4772	0.4796
YEN	0.1231	0.1237
YEN (USD)	0.5678	0.5706
ITL	0.3699	0.3717
JPY	0.0421	0.0423

Plan to cancel Ministry of Supply arouses controversy

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

FOR MORE than a year, the Ministry of Supply has been working on a strategy to gradually liberalize prices of basic consumer commodities. The move is expected to minimize the role played by this ministry.

In fact, the general direction is towards cancelling the Ministry of Supply altogether within two months.

Critics say consumers will be the main victims if this action is carried out. They argue that it is difficult to obtain basic commodities when prices soar, as it is expected, after this ministry is dissolved.

Not everyone share this belief.

Dr Mohammed Obeidat, director of the National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) said he did not have reservations over measures that would free prices.

"But such policy requires a legal umbrella that organizes the rights of the seller and buyer process between merchants and consumers," he told The Star.

He added that this process must be worked out under the supervision and control of an authority, which may be in this case the Ministry of Supply or the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

"What is needed is a gradual liberalization of prices and a rational mechanism to have a balance between allowances and prices," Dr Obeidat stressed.

Obeidat noted earlier that the liberalization of prices created a sort of imbalance between a few group of merchants and manufacturers on one hand, and low income consumers on the other.

He stressed that the liberalization of prices should be made "illegal" at the present time.

"The council of Supply,

which is the sole authority responsible for submitting recommendations to the Cabinet to either increase or decrease the price of commodities has not convened for more than a year."

Earlier this week, Minister of Supply Munir Sobar said that the liberalization of prices will be finalized according to the supply and demand policy.

He added that the ministry called on the Cabinet to make adjustments to the law governing the ministry to prohibit monopoly, protect the consumer and maintain stability of prices.

"The Law of Supply is also to be amended in view of the market policy towards the flotation of prices," Sobar said.

A law to prohibit monopoly and encourage competition is seen by Obeidat as a must in addition to other regulations aimed at protecting the consumer.

Eversince it was established, twenty years ago, one of the primary roles of the Ministry of Supply was to prevent acts of monopoly by merchants.

"Its task is to impose basic



Obeidat

supply commodities such as wheat, sugar, rice and dry milk and sell them at subsidized prices to the public," said Ahmed Theibani, director of Information and Public Relations at the Ministry of Supply.

In light of the government's policy to allow the private sector a greater role in economic development, the role of the

Ministry has been minimized.

In August last year, the Ministry lifted subsidies on bread and fodder as the first step towards free prices. As a result, bread and fodder prices have gone up.

The Ministry then deregulated the sugar and rice markets allowing the private sector to import them freely.

Today and in some markets, competition has successfully pushed the prices of these commodities downwards.

For example, maize is now being sold at lower price for farmers as a fodder.

For farmers, the ministry is expected to abandon the pricing of all commodities. Government is yet to free 26 commodities. Its plan is to fully liberalize prices by the end of 1997.

The general feeling among Jordanians is that coupons for rice, sugar and milk will be cancelled by next year.

Instead they will get a cash compensation as it is the case with bread. All these steps are seen as evidence for the cancel-

lation of the Ministry of Supply.

"Those who speak and support this measure do not really consider its task and services over the last twenty years," Dr. Obeidat said.

"While such strategy is part of the economic reform programs, this doesn't necessarily mean it should entail the removal of the Ministry of Supply."

According to Obeidat, Egypt has moved forward in the economic reform programs, but it has not quashed its Ministry of Supply. Instead, it carried on changes on the role of the Ministry, according to Obeidat.

"Officials at the Ministry of Supply are required to organize regular inspection visits to monitor prices of commodities," Obeidat maintained.

The Minister of Supply, however, has pointed out that the cancellation won't be an easy process, it is still under study saying that no measures have been adopted in this regard so far. He added that the issue will be settled within two months.

Sobar and Theibani expected the Ministry of Supply to become an independent regulatory body or a department annexed to the Ministry of Industry.

Dr Obeidat called on the Ministry to secure a sufficient and high quality reserve of basic consumer items at reasonable prices. "The Ministry is also required to conduct researches on commercial dealings in the market and monitor consumption," he added.

According to the results of the studies the Ministry will be able to draw up awareness media programs in conjunction with the NSCP, women federations and public committees," Obeidat said.

'Amoco' launches natural gas project in Jordan

A STUDY is being conducted on the feasibility of constructing a pipeline to provide Jordan with Egyptian natural gas. The 300-kilometer-long line will pass through Sinai peninsula and the Red Sea to deliver Egyptian gas into the Aqaba port, according to Minister of Energy Hashem Al Dabbas.

This project is to be carried out by the American-based "Amoco" which plans to construct a national network for gas pipelines for industrial use. This will include phosphate and fertilizers plants and electric power generation stations. Al Dabbas added.

The Jordanian electric power stations, which operate on the costly oil fuel will then

switch to gas which is cheaper.

The agreement that was signed recently between Jordan and Amoco includes a period over one year and a half before finalizing talks on gas sales.

Jordanian officials describe the project to be economically better than the proposed (and recently cancelled) project to provide Jordan and Israel with Qatari natural gas.

Amoco is currently cooperating with Jordan National Petroleum Co. to develop the production of natural gas fields near the Iraqi border. These fields produce about 30 million cubic feet for electric power usage.

Negotiations on Jordanian-European partnership move on successfully

AMMAN (Star)—The latest rounds of negotiations between Jordan and the European Union, held in Brussels two weeks ago, has brought the two sides closer to an agreement on partnership.

Dispute over certain issues concerning patent and intellectual property rights and the rehabilitation of the agricultural and industrial sectors in Jordan were successfully negotiated.

However, the issue of allowing non-Jordanians deported from Europe back into Jordan, after first being granted entry to Europe through European embassies in Amman, remains unresolved.

Jordanian officials maintain



Khalaf

that granting these visas does not mean that Jordan should be obliged to receive them again.

The majority of the unwanted Arab refugees in Europe are Iraqis and Palestinians.

Mr Raymon Mastes from the European delegation in Amman said that each member of the EU will be dealing with the problem of deporting non-Jordanians independently.

"A delegation from the ministry of justice in Holland is expected to arrive in Amman by next month to settle the matter with the Jordanian government," Mastes said.

Barcelona's second summit, due next April, is seen as a good opportunity for Jordan to sign its partnership agreement with Europe. Mastes added.

On the other hand, Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf

seemed satisfied over the European stance regarding agricultural commodities and the increase of Jordanian exports to Europe.

In regards to the non-Jordanians, the Minister said Jordan has already suggested alternative solutions, that are now being studied by the European officials.

"Jordan has refused to negotiate on this matter with each European country alone, but will discuss it with the EU, as representative of European

viewpoints," Khalaf added.

Another delegation member, the Secretary General of the Ministry of Industry and Trade Mohammad Al Samadi, said Jordan is willing to speed up the signing of the agreement and highly appreciates the EU's role in helping Jordan.

According to sources at the Ministry, the previous differences in negotiations over patent violations by the Jordanian pharmaceutical sector had been solved.

The Jordanian pharmaceutical industry is a major exporter to Europe. The industry's edge is its competitive prices at which these products are sold in comparison with the European and American ones.

Gaza home to the new Al Quds bank

AL QUDS for Development and Investment Bank is expected to start its activities in Gaza Strip soon. The bank is linked with the Jordan Investment and Finance Bank.

The capital of the bank is \$20 million, of which \$15 million were covered by Jordanian, Palestinian and Arab financiers. The remainder is offered for general subscription.

The headquarters of Al Quds Bank will be Gaza and two branches are to be opened in an area near Jerusalem and Nablus within six months.

The bank will secure banking services for clients including long-term, medium-term and short-term loans. In addition, the bank will contribute in development investments in Palestine covering commercial, industrial agricultural and tourism enterprises. Its plan involves establishing a number of investment concerns to support the Palestinian economy.

Business Chronicle

AFM dealings record best results since 1995

ENDING A month of steady-paced activities, trading at the Amman Financial market (AFM) rose at the first day of the Eid holiday to reach its highest level since 1995.

The official index closed at 157.24 points. The banking industry indicator recorded a significant rise breaking the previous 200 points record in 1992, led by the Arab Bank which hit 265 dinars.

Trading, analysts say, has witnessed a weak activity during Ramadan when the index remained stable at 153-155 points.

However, AFM has registered a noticeable progress over the past two months. The implementation of the oil for food deal last December led to a remarkable rise in the share prices and stocks trade as the index went up from 146 points to 155-157. Reaching an agreement over Hebron deal between Israel and the PNA has triggered another rise.

Some observers attributed active trading to the cancellation of the capitalization tax approval lately by the lower house. Additionally many banking and industrial companies disclosed their positive results for 1996, compared with previous years.

The developments in the Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli economic relations, particularly the implementation of the Door to Door Agreement instead of the Back to Back system between Jordan and Israel has enhanced hopes to revive the cargo transport process between the crossing points and achieve more trade openness between Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

The upwards trend at the AFM is encouraged by capital flows from Arab and foreign investors who showed great interest in the market more than two years ago. Arab investments in the market account for one third of the total dealings in addition to European, American and Japanese investments.

Sources at the market point out that the value of traded securities since 1979 and until 1996 has reached JD 90 million.

By the end of the week trading quieted and the official index was stable at 157 points.

Investment activities will be on the rise, says Abu Al Ragheb

AMMAN (Star)—Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abu Al Ragheb said that Jordan is to witness intensive economic activity during this year resulting in further Arab and foreign investments in the fields of agriculture, industry, tourism, and development of Jordanian exports.



Abu Al Ragheb

Abu Al Ragheb added in an interview with Petra news agency that "Jordan is to initiate a wide range of economic initiatives on the Arab arena aiming at consolidating its economic relations with Arab countries, and opening new markets before the Jordanian exports which are expected to witness a great growth in 1997."

The Minister said that a working team chaired by him has been formed to prepare a national economic strategy, aiming at increasing and improving production, as well as adhering to the international measures and specifications, developing exports, and attracting more investments, and improving the investment atmosphere in Jordan.

The working team has begun setting the structural plan needed for this national economic strategy," Abu Al Ragheb said.

He pointed out that the strategy includes training the public and private economic cadres to deal quickly, flexibly, and accurately with the economic issues, in addition to benefiting from the laws and regulations adopted in the economically-advanced countries.

He added that the Jordanian-Arab commercial agreements have been activated recently, and this will reflect positively on the Jordanian economy, pointing out that there are free trade zones with Egypt, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, in addition to a trade agreement with Lebanon and a trade protocol with Iraq.

The Minister explained that 45% of Jordan's exports goes to Arab countries, and 35% of its imports is from Arab countries.

The Minister said that negotiations are being held to join the European partnership, expressing hope that the partnership agreement would be concluded within few months.

He added that Jordanian industry has begun applying the ISO specifications which will increase Jordan's exports to Europe and provide the hard currency needed to finance the imports of the public and private sectors. Jordan has started negotiations with GATT and is receiving the questions concerning the trade cooperation, pointing out that Jordan will conclude its response at the end of next month to start negotiations.

A study of 1948 Palestinian villages

Continued from page 4

In the months before the outbreak of wide-scale fighting, nonmilitary Zionist organizations managed to arrange the expulsion of Palestinian communities from a number of villages. The Jewish National Fund (JNF), and particularly the director of its Lands Department, Yosef Weitz, took an active role in this effort. According to historian Benny Morris, Weitz met with other JNF officials on 26 March 1948 and called for the expulsion of the inhabitants of Qumya (along with those of al-Tira, a few km to the northeast). The reason he gave was that they were "not taking upon themselves the responsibility of preventing the infiltration of irregulars [i.e. Arab guerrillas], adding that, "They must be forced to leave their village until peace comes." According to Morris, by sheer coincidence, most of the inhabitants of Qumya left on their own initiative on the very same day. He writes that they left out of fear of Jewish attack and out of a sense of vulnerability as well as economic pressures. They were not ordered to leave by their Jewish neighbours, but there may have been "friendly advice" to this effect. Morris does

not mention the nature of the "economic pressures" that were applied but does say that the villagers were evacuated on British army trucks. A few days later, Weitz wrote to his superior that Qumya had been depopulated, commenting that, "There is a tendency among our neighbours... to leave their villages." A dozen men who stayed behind to guard the village site, were subsequently evicted.

Four months later, in late July, a neighboring settlement, Kibbutz 'En Charod, applied for permission from the Israeli Agriculture Center to seize the land of Qumya. Morris does not make clear whether the appropriation was approved.

on the land of the still existing Arab village of Tamra. Geva', also established in 1921, is about 2 km west of the village site but is not on village land.

The village today
The whole site is fenced in. Almond, mulberry, and pomegranate trees and cactuses grow around the rubble that dots the village site. Cypress trees grow among the ruins of the village school. The Israeli settlements of Tel Yosef, 'En Charod-Ichud, and 'En Charod-Me'uchad cultivate the land south of the village, while Geva' cultivates the land to the west.

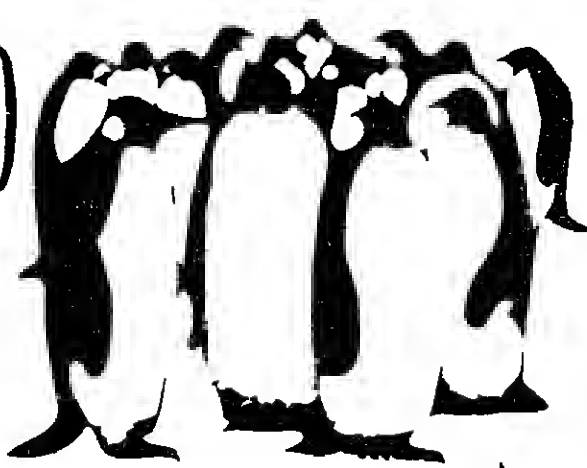
Palestine Times
Prof. Walid Khalidi is a distinguished historian and widely recognised authority on the Palestine question. Research Fellow at Harvard's Centre for Middle Eastern Studies. General Secretary of the Institute for Palestine Studies since 1963.

To order "All That Remains" email IPS at: <IPS-DC@CAIS.COM>

MARKET WATCH 15-18 February

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY	
↑ %		↑ %		↑ %		↑ %	
+ Assengh + Arab Pharmaceutical + Arab Financial Investment		+ Jordan National Bank + Jordan Ceramic Factories + Institutional Trade		+ The National Bank + Holy Lands Insurance + National Plastic Industry		+ Jordan National Bank + National Plastic Industry + Al Zaph Ekhaim and Investment	
5.26 5.23 4.35		4.92 4.07 2.04		4.76 5.76 1.82		3.50 1.79 0.95	
↓ %		↓ %		↓ %		↓ %	
+ MCO + Al Zaph Education and Investment + Jordan's Modern Cables		+ Public Mining + Arab Medical Appliances + National Portfolio		+ Central Trade + Maynet Dies and Moulds + Jordan Bank		+ Arab Int'l Hotels + Jordan Trade Facilities + Usual Engineering	
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						299584	

ROUND
OWNEMI Music Arabia
signs Walid Toufic

EMI Music Arabia announced the signing of singer Walid Toufic to an exclusive long-term contract.

The artist is one of the most respected performers on the Arabic music scene for many years.

His debut album for EMI is scheduled for release in March '97 and it is set to be a huge "criss over" smash.

The signing is part of EMI Music Arabia's goal in discovering and promoting the best talent on the music scene in the region.

Seen in the photograph are: Walid Toufic, & Frederic Giacardo, president of EMI Middle East.



Amanda Shihadeh

'Empathetic' perception of life

By Anca De Maio
Special to The Star

Last Tuesday evening, the young and talented artist Amanda Shihadeh launched a tempting invitation to a completely fresh and new art experience to the Jordanian public. Figurative and symbolic, the artistic work she is displaying till 6 March at the French Cultural Center, brings a different note on the regional scene of prevalently abstract Jordanian and Arabic art.

Born in England from a Palestinian father and a French mother, Shihadeh discovered her privileged relation with painting when she was five. She grew up painting as naturally as playing, and in 1995 she graduated from the Maidstone Art College in Kent—South England. After two first exhibitions in London, the blossoming artistic personality of Shihadeh, aged 23, reveals itself in Amman as particularly original.

Her artistic individuality nourishes on her multicultural heritage and combines western and Mediterranean values into a well-stylized personal style. "My sensitivity and colours are coming from my paternal origin, whereas my preference for figurative representation reflects to a certain extent my admiration for Giacometti's figures, and probably the present tendency of British art school," she explained.

"What I am interested in is to portray human emotions as symbols and show their universal magic," she pointed out, "although they are brought out differently from culture to culture." Shihadeh's artistic approach is psychological in the sense that she analyzes and expresses emotions. "Nevertheless, her lyricism is meant to be indirect, as the feelings conveyed are always



attributed to mediating characters.

She gets inspired by listening to or reading people's stories. Behind moving true-life stories or written biographies, she always seeks the emotional aspects of the facts. Thus, her intellectual and imaginative apprehension of some one else's state of mind triggers off the process of artistic creation. "I produce one painting and if the story is still present in my mind, a second and sometimes, even a third one follows to carry on the events," she said.

The empathetic "feeling" for Shihadeh becomes a character in itself, while the story

that created it is reduced into the framework of its own adventure. Many of her pictures come in pairs and their complementarity is indivisible because they illustrate 'events' of the same story. The paintings, entitled *Tower of desire*, 2 and 3 follow the progression of passionate desire into sublime satisfaction.

The sequence of paintings called *Old China* (1/2), *Motherhood* (1/2) and *Occupation*, depict five variations on the same emotional theme. The events consist in a Chinese mother binding her daughter's feet and teaching her to accept the humiliation all women had to suffer. The two

ings behind this scenario throb mutually in pulsating colors and forms that suggest maternal love, suffering, revolt and bitter acceptance. Shihadeh's most recent mixed media on textured gel and inks are dedicated to happiness. Warm colors like orange and melting yellow vibrate in contrast with blue shapes and dark outlines.

The choreography of the self-sufficient swaying figures is gracious and esoteric. "Dynamics and textures are very important to me," she stressed expressing her regret that the simultaneous stimulation of visual, olfactory and tactile senses experienced in a painter's study is not possible in an exhibition hall.

"The mystics of my latest paintings have no religious connotation," she underlined. The spirituality of her art resides in the complex mechanism of empathy, that is in the capacity to completely assimilate an alter ego's despair, loneliness, joy, pain, fulfillment, burden, paradisiacal bliss or "annihilation," and re-experience it with violent intensity and stunning sincerity. Her expressionist artistic perception of the real world reflects the progress of her own spiritual trip towards two main existential goals: "self-improvement and happiness."

The art she presents is supported by reading of what she calls "powerful books." Her guide book is Ben Okry's "Astonishing the Gods."

"With Shihadeh, the strength of composition and coloring associated with an interesting symbolism and a direct simple surrealism, are indicative of a high artistic potential," said Ali Vaher, the director of the Darat al Funun. "The French Cultural Center is getting the recognition of a place where many artists who eventually became famous, first exhibited their works when they were young promising talents," he added.

JTI hosted French
tourism delegation

AS PART of its efforts to support tourism in Jordan, the Jordan Tourism Investment company hosted to a dinner party a French Tourism delegation last week. The ceremony, held at Kan Zaman tourist village, was aimed at acquainting the French tourism representatives with the touristic potentials of Jordan as well as marketing the Jordanian archaeological sites to the whole world. Attending the event was a number of Jordanian and French tourist agents, the press and members of the executive board of the JTI.

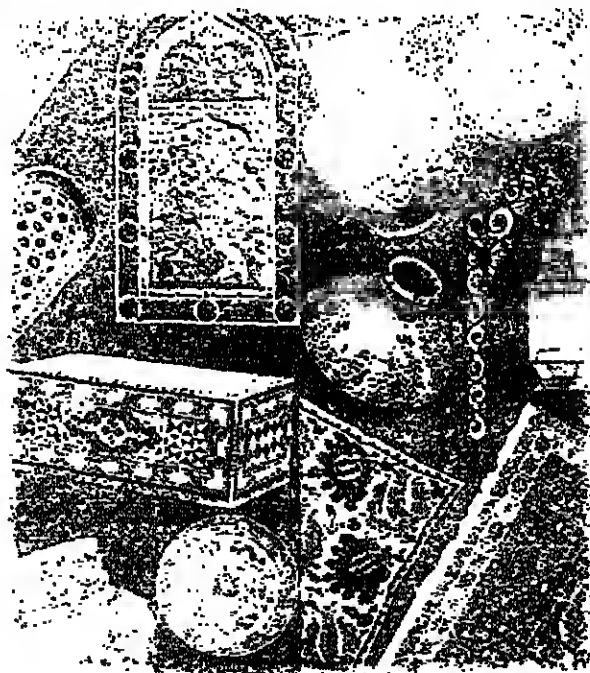
The French delegation was invited by the Ministry of Tourism, Royal Jordanian, the Tourism Promotion Committee and private tour operators. The visit comes amidst concerted efforts exerted to support the Jordanian cultural season which will be held in Paris between March and October 1997. The French delegation is expected to promote Jordan during an exhibition that is aimed at highlighting Jordan's culture and archaeological milestones.

Preserving the spirituality
of Islamic decorative artsBy Munther Hamdan
Star Staff Writer

Much has been written about the creativity of Islamic artists throughout centuries. The Muslim world has been able to graduate artists and craftsmen who produced inimitable works of ornamentation and decoration. Efforts nowadays are exerted by some of the Arab countries to highlight the artistic achievements of the Muslim world as well as revive what used to genuinely reflect the Islamic identity.

Recently a seminar was held between 5-10 January in Syria to discuss Islamic decorative arts in general and the art of Arabesque in particular. Entitled "Arabesque in Traditional Crafts of OIC Countries," the seminar was organized by the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture IRCICA in collaboration with the UNESCO and the Syrian Ministry of Culture.

An experts, artists, representatives of NGOs from the Arab and Muslim world submitted papers calling for spreading awareness about the different historical and technical aspects of Islamic decorative arts. They also discussed means



to revive and preserve these forms of art. Among the papers were one on "Handicraft Products Development within National and International Framework" by

Mohamed Toure, another entitled "An analysis of the Meaning of Arabesque," by Abdur Raheem Ghaleb and a third on "The Impact of Islamic Decoration on European Arts" by Mohammad Zainab.

In his paper, Ghaleb says that the Europeans in general define the Arabesque as a scrolling plant form but in the middle ages such patterns were called Moresque while the word Arabesque did not come into use in Europe until the 16th century. He went on to say that Arabesque is not only about ornaments, but "it is a harmonious marriage between calligraphy starshapes and circles... This world of Patterns is much more than elegant lines and one has to go behind the appearance to get the abstraction and the sublimation of the dancer, the flower and the grapevine to the mystical state of the rhythm in unity." The Arabesque patterns can be applied on different materials like the ceramic, wood, textile etc.

Ghaleb deduced that abstraction in art first appeared in the Islamic world. He believes that this abstraction was introduced to reflect the unity of the Muslim people regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.

Jordanian artist Samia Al Zaru, who also participated in the seminar, has a different view. She says that though the patterns of the Arabesque have been preserved yet we find that the artists and craftsmen of each Muslim country have added their touch which goes in line with their social and ethnic backgrounds.

Focusing in her paper on the educational aspect regarding the visual arts and traditional handicrafts, Al Zaru believes that students must be aware when creating a work of art of their association with their land and the surrounding environment.

Al Zaru, who is known in Jordan for mastering the art of installation, tackled during the seminar the methods that should be followed in teaching the students of Jordan, Yemen and Palestine such inherited crafts as the Arabesque. She recommends that the art curricula must be developed to include information about the handicrafts and the decorative art as being parts of the Arab and Islamic heritage. Her paper covered students from the basic, secondary and vocational education in addition to the higher education.

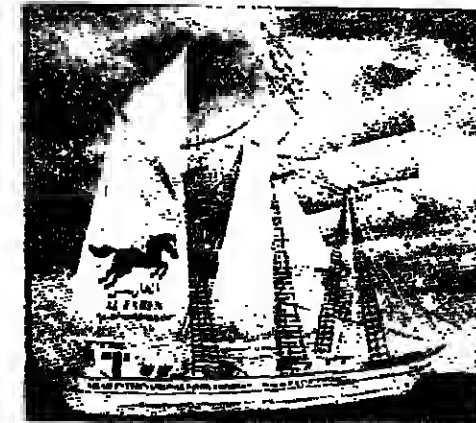
Zaru believes that for someone to master the art of Arabesque he must first learn the basics of its patterns. But academic knowledge is not enough and that is why the learner must be trained the skills by a craftsman.

"The combination of skills and knowledge is important, but it is also important to have creative craftsmen who would preserve this art for generations to come."

Dubai holds Al Fares '97 equine exhibition

THE SECOND Arab International Exhibition for Horse and Equipment-Al Fares '97 will be held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE defence Minister and crown prince of Dubai. The event will take place at the World Trade Center in Dubai from 23 to 26 November.

Al Fares '97, the only event of its kind in the Middle East, is designed to reflect the renaissance of the Arab horse and the age old equine culture of the Arab world. It will serve



as a platform for owners, trainers, breeders, bloodstock agents, equine artists, jockeys, other equine industry professionals and manufacturers of horse and riding equipment, particularly racing and polo equipment. "We are privileged to be a part of this renaissance," said Fayez Ahmed, of Al Fajer Information and Services, the organizers of this high powered event.

The organizers have drawn up an interesting itinerary which includes The Arabian Knights—a show depicting the history of the Arab horse and the Arab horsemanship, an international competition for Antique carriages and coaches, an international dressage competition for best costumes for horse and riders, a medieval jousting tournament and several trick riding events like the Indian Apache show and the cowboy act. An exhibition polo match is also being planned.

The product profile of Al Fares '97 includes



racing and polo equipment, trainers and breeders equipment, horse feed, horse accessories, etc. The exhibition is expected to be visited by representatives of official bodies and equestrian organizations, schools, veterinary professionals, etc. Exhibitors from ten countries have already confirmed participation.

SCRAPBOOK

By Manal Omar

What a service!

PERHAPS THE most stunning aspect of Jordanian life is the overwhelming dedication to customer service. For those of you who didn't catch the sarcastic tone dripping from the previous sentence let me clarify my point. The two words—customer service—seem to be an unexplored terra nova in the commercial sector of Jordan. Granted, the concept seems to be filtering into five star hotels and restaurants. However, the overall treatment of customers in Jordan is poor to say the least.

Although this opinion may be harsh, it was by no means formulated overnight. In the beginning, I desperately tried to convince myself that the first few encounters were isolated events. However, after a few visits to restaurants it seemed that almost all hosts had taken a private vow to ignore the customers for at least five minutes. Meanwhile, the waiters apparently were trained to make the customer feel guilty for each request they had. The entire concept of an evening out is virtually ruined after a merely satisfactory meal with an extravagant bill coupled with poor treatment.

Even those restaurants and cafes that portray a sophisticated and professional aura suffer from problems with customer service. The waiters and hosts act with virtually no enthusiasm and repeat phrases without sincerity. The fakeness in an attempt to portray an attitude that they care about customers is almost as offensive as a lack of customer service in the first place.

Unfortunately, the fashion industry is no better. I remember during my first month in Jordan a nice blazer caught my eye. When I entered the store to inquire about the price nobody was in sight. The young salesperson finally decided to emerge from upstairs after about ten minutes. Slightly embarrassed from being ignored for so long, I asked the price. With a look of annoyance he retorted, "Isn't the price tag on it?"

On another occasion, I visited a distributor for a well known fashion designer only to receive similar treatment. Again, an outfit interested me in the window. When I entered the store the young salesman was on the phone. I browsed around for awhile, waiting to ask for the price and my size. After about fifteen minutes of listening to the young man plan his entire week-end with his girlfriend, I walked out the store, furious that I had not even been acknowledged.

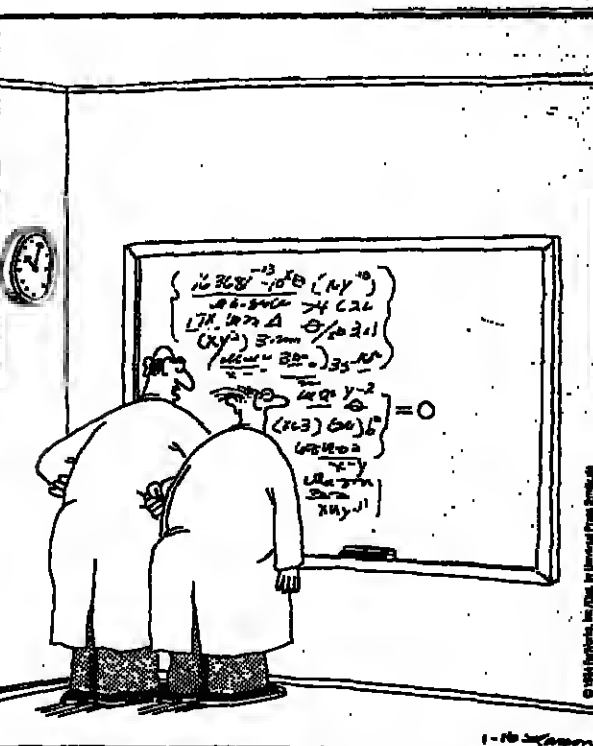
Such incidents alone are frustrating. Yet after a few months a new discovery made the situation even more depressing. It turned out that the phrase customer service would suddenly become familiar if the language spoken was English. It was amazing to see how different people treated me when I spoke in my mother tongue. The rule did not just apply to me. Other customers who threw in a few words of English were given more attention, as if for one reason or another this made them from the elite.

The basis of sales is to please the customer, and to make them feel special. I racked my brain trying to understand the reasoning behind such poor treatment in so many places. Perhaps it is because these stores have such an overwhelming number of customers, and so many Jordanians are willing to put half their pay check on fine dining or a nice jacket. I sincerely doubt it.

Plain and simple, it is a lack of professionalism and a lack of training. It does not take a genius to realize that such complaints are being repeated among the consumers. The frustration I feel is only part of the inspiration behind complaining. More importantly, there is a need to become aware of the issue so that those who are in charge can properly address the issue.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"No doubt about it, Ellington—we've mathematically expressed the purpose of the universe. God, how I love the thrill of scientific discovery!"



"Ah! The shed skin of some large, reptilian denizen. And a bonus, Ellington! Here's his wallet."

The

ENGLISH PRO

SATURDAY

- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:08—The Advent
- Mickey and Donat
- 2:30—Museum
- 3:00—French Pro
- 4:00—Gilette spe
- 4:30—Practical
- University
- 5:10—Blue Heel
- 6:00—French Pro
- 7:30—News Head
- 7:35—Hanging w
- 8:00—Magazine
- 8:30—Prism
- 9:10—The new
- of Superman
- 10:00—News at
- 10:25—Mystic
- 11:15—Feature
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- 11:00—Sisters
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- 2:00—Holy Koran
- 2:08—The Mupp

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'NOIL

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Un nouvel appel «à la retenue» au Liban

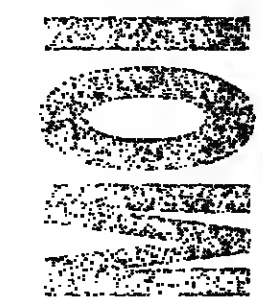
Le comité international de surveillance du cessez-le-feu au Liban sud a «une nouvelle fois» appelé cette semaine les belligérants du Liban sud à «faire preuve de retenue» pour épargner les civils. Dans un communiqué diffusé à l'issue d'une réunion consacrée à l'examen de deux plaintes déposées l'une par le Liban et l'autre par Israël, le comité a appelé les parties prenantes au conflit, essentiellement Israël et le Hezbollah, à «se conformer strictement et totalement aux dispositions des accords du 26 avril 1996».

Selon les accords qui avaient mis fin à une vaste opération militaire (notre photo) israélienne au Liban en avril 1996 (175 morts, essentiellement des civils), les belligérants doivent s'abstenir de prendre pour cible des civils de part et d'autre de la frontière libano-israélienne, et de lancer des attaques dans des zones peuplées.

Le comité avait été saisi le 12 février dernier à la suite d'une série de raids aériens israéliens dans le sud et l'est du Liban. Le comité, qui a reconnu ces faits comme établis, a également admis comme avéré le fait, dénoncé par Israël le 7 février, que cinq charges explosives avaient été dissimulées dans le village de Beit Liff, dans le secteur occidental de la zone occupée par l'armée israélienne au Liban. Mis en place en août 1996, le comité, composé de la France, des États-Unis, du Liban, de la Syrie et d'Israël, peut dénoncer ces violations mais ne peut imposer aucune sanction.



SELON



Tout le mystère de l'Égypte et la magie de ses nuits orientales s'évanouissent pour l'amour de quelques dollars. En vous offrant un petit séjour égyptien, vous découvrez qu'il est difficile de vous promener dans le Caire où ailleurs sans verser de bakchich à vos différents interlocuteurs.

Vous avez en effet tort si vous croyez pouvoir échapper au harcèlement financier constant qui règne en Égypte. Touriste ou citoyen, il n'y a pas de différence. Le bakchich fait partie de votre vie quotidienne et doit vous permettre d'assurer votre confort personnel.

Il est pratiquement impossible de prendre un repas sans verser un pourcentage, non seulement au serveur, mais à celui qui vous a ouvert la porte du restaurant, à celui qui vous a accueilli, et enfin au directeur du restaurant afin de lui montrer la qualité de sa cuisine et le confort de son établissement.

Cette routine du bakchich n'est pas limitée au domaine de la restauration. Dans les rues, vous serez toujours exposés au harcèlement des chauffeurs de taxis qui offrent leurs services pour un prix bien éloigné du tarif de base d'une course dans la capitale.

Une simple halte au bord du Nil peut tourner à l'émence. Croyant que le fait de vous promener tranquillement sur la corniche ne vous procure aucun plaisir, des dizaines de gamins viennent vous proposer des voyages en bateau, des sandwiches ou des boissons, voire même un rendez-vous dans une cafétéria du coin. Une multitude de services dont vous pouvez profiter contre un simple bakchich.

Vous pensez vous mettre à l'abri en retournant à votre hôtel. Vous vous trompez à nouveau. Un bakchich devra toujours être prêt pour celui qui répondra à vos questions, un autre pour celui qui se chargera de vous montrer la piscine, puis un dernier pour celui qui vous tend une serviette.

Déplu, vous tentez de vous réfugier en dernier ressort aux toilettes. Là une dame vus tend la main à la sortie avec un grand sourire. Une autre vous aura auparavant tendu serviettes et savons. Dans un excès de courtoisie, j'ai tenté de quitter les lieux sans verser le bakchich traditionnel. Des insultes ont alors accompagné ma sortie.

Il est franchement regrettable qu'un pays si prestigieux et si remarquable quant à son histoire et sa civilisation, semble être aujourd'hui devenu le paradis de l'exploitation touristique. Cet abus constant ne peut en effet que donner une mauvaise image de ce pays, et dissuader certains touristes de s'y rendre.

Sa'eda Kilani

Le Jourdain, on y revient.
Tous les jeudis dans le Star
645 380

Politique intérieure

Les islamistes changent de tactique

Régulièrement évoquée ces dernières années, la participation d'islamistes au sein du gouvernement semble aujourd'hui plus que jamais d'actualité. Dans un document récemment publié, des islamistes se disent prêts à intégrer le cabinet jordanien.

Que se passe-t-il

au sein du mouvement islamiste en Jordanie? Cette question est brûlante après la présentation le 22 janvier dernier du «document Akayleh» lors de la «réunion du dialogue». Un document ensuite publié par les plus grands quotidiens jordaniens.

Cette réunion organisée par les Frères musulmans avait pour objectif de discuter l'éventualité de la participation de représentants politiques islamistes au gouvernement jordanien. En 1990, cinq ministres islamistes faisaient partie du cabinet de Moudar Badran. A cette époque, il n'y avait ni normalisation des relations avec Israël, ni même processus de paix israélo-palestinien ou conférence de Madrid.

Dans son document de travail, le député Abdallah Akayleh, membre du comité exécutif du Front de l'Action islamique (FAI) ayant déjà occupé les fonctions de ministre, retrace l'histoire du mouvement islamiste jordanien depuis un demi-siècle. «Nos deux objectifs principaux n'ont pas été atteints, à savoir le retour à la loi coranique (abandonnée après la chute du califat islamique en Turquie en 1920) et la lutte contre le projet sioniste en Palestine», explique Abdallah Akayleh. «Pire encore, ces objectifs semblent aujourd'hui être plus éloignés que jamais».

Abdallah Akayleh reconnaît que l'opposition manifestée par son mouvement et les autres formations politiques refusant la normalisation avec Israël n'a pas abouti à grand chose depuis la signature du traité de paix avec Israël en octobre 1994.

«Il ne s'agit pas désormais de se contenter de prêcher dans les mosquées», écrit cet important responsable islamiste qui annonce clairement la nouvelle orientation choisie par un des courants du mouvement isla-

liste. «Pour mieux résister, pour être plus influents, il faut que nous occupions des postes de décision, que nous soyons présents au sein des rouages de l'Etat».

Il semble en effet que les islamistes soient aujourd'hui «jaloux» du parti centriste Ahdad qui, bien qu'étant beaucoup plus jeune que le parti des Frères musulmans, dispose déjà de deux portefeuilles ministériels dans l'actuel gouvernement.

Abdallah Akayleh rappelle que le mouvement islamiste a opté depuis longtemps pour la réforme, et non pour la révolution. «Si nous laissons échapper cette occasion, cela nuira fortement à notre popularité» affirme-t-il.

Ce document a suscité de nombreux commentaires au sein de la classe politique. Certains ont qualifié cette déclaration de «renouveau historique», d'autres allant jusqu'à prévoir «une mini-perestroïka» chez les islamistes. Mais cette déclaration n'a cependant pas convaincu tous les analystes politiques, certains sceptiques ne voyant dans cette démarche qu'une tentative d'entrer dans le prochain gouvernement sans réelle volonté de changement.

Le véritable enjeu de cette ouverture affichée réside dans l'isolement des islamistes qui, depuis quelques années, se montrent incapables de tenir leurs promesses électorales.

A l'approche des élections législatives prévues pour le mois de novembre, il s'agit en effet de redonner espoir à des militants qui semblent être de plus en plus frustrés et déçus.

Une chose curieuse est passée inaperçue: dans le document publié, Abdallah Akayleh ne présente aucun programme ayant pour but de résoudre les multiples problèmes que connaît la société jordanienne. Pourtant, ce document reconnaît la gravité de ces problèmes.



Le document préparé par Abdallah Akayleh a relancé le débat autour de la participation possible d'islamistes au sein du gouvernement jordanien.

La phraseologie de ce document, qui rappelle à plusieurs reprises l'attachement du FAI aux principes traditionnels, semble masquer une fuite en avant. Comment en effet concilier ces principes avec la politique actuelle appliquée en Jordanie? Par exemple, on peut se demander quelle serait l'attitude d'un responsable islamiste nommé au poste de ministre de l'Industrie et du Commerce vis-à-vis des relations économiques à entretenir avec Israël. Refuserait-il alors catégoriquement de rencontrer son homologue israélien?

Une fois de plus, le pragmatisme l'emporterait, tout au moins au sein de cet important courant politique des Frères musulmans. Ceux-ci n'ont en fait jamais eu un programme politique

clair et leur opposition à la politique gouvernementale est toute relative. Car jusqu'à présent, l'attitude réservée du FAI a plutôt été un facteur de stabilité pour le régime politique en place.

Suleiman Sweiss

Projet

Amman rêve d'un musée

L'an 2000 pourrait être pour la Jordanie l'année de l'ouverture d'un grand musée national. Celui-ci serait situé au cœur même de la capitale jordanienne, en basse-ville.

Si la capitale jordanienne

compte déjà plusieurs musées disséminés dans la ville ou sur ses hauteurs, elle étudie depuis longtemps la possibilité de se doter d'une grande infrastructure. Aujourd'hui, ce projet semble en bonne voie. «Un groupe de Jordaniens passionnés d'art et de culture rêvent depuis plusieurs années de créer un musée national reflétant notre héritage et présentant notre patrimoine. Cette idée a pris forme voilà maintenant sept ou huit ans», explique Sherifa Hind Nasser, directrice du comité chargé d'étudier ce projet.

Ce devrait être un établissement à vocation éducative, et non seulement culturelle. Il devrait comprendre des départements s'intéressant à l'environnement, à l'histoire naturelle, à la géologie, aux traditions vestimentaires, à la vie quotidienne à travers les âges. D'autres sections hébergeraient, elles, des pièces historiques proprement dites. «Le musée devra être global. Il s'adressera à la fois aux touristes désireux de connaître la Jordanie, et aux écoliers, qui y trouveront un complément des programmes scolaires», explique Sherifa Hind Nasser.

La création de ce nouveau musée peut aujourd'hui soulever certaines interrogations. La Jordanie compte déjà 17 musées. Pour Sherifa Hind Nasser, un projet qui s'inscrit

il ne s'agit bien sûr pas de leur faire de la concurrence.

«Chaque musée conservera ses pièces. Le musée national pourra, à l'occasion, leur emprunter quelques-unes. Mais la majorité des pièces exposées dans ce nouveau musée proviendra de stocks du département des Antiquités. Beaucoup de richesses jordanienues sont actuellement conservées à l'étranger, et si toutes ne reviendront pas, il est possible d'en accueillir certaines. Le musée bénéficiera des meilleures conditions d'exposition et de conservation. Sa chance est d'arriver après de nombreux autres musées nationaux, et de profiter ainsi de leurs expériences».

S'il a fallu si longtemps pour que ce projet voie le jour, c'est en grande partie en raison des différents avis émis à propos de son emplacement. «Certains voulaient que le musée se trouve dans le centre-ville, alors que d'autres le voulaient ailleurs, là où il y a moins de pollution et de circulation. Lorsque la mairie d'Amman a acquis le terrain de Ras-el-Ayn en basse-ville (ndlr: emplacement du bâtiment de la municipalité du Grand Amman), le problème a été résolu. Le musée appartiendra ainsi à tous. Situé au cœur historique de la ville, il rassemblera toutes les couches sociales de la population», explique Sherifa Hind Nasser. Un projet qui s'inscrit

donc dans celui de réhabilitation économique et sociale du centre-ville d'Amman.

La surface prévue de ce musée est de 12 000 mètres carrés, avec un jardin public tout autour.

Actuellement, son architecture est à l'étude. «Pour un musée, il faut commencer par concevoir l'intérieur avant l'extérieur. Le concept muséologique déterminera le type de bâtiment souhaité», ajoute Sherifa Hind Nasser. Ce qui est certain, c'est que le musée devra s'adapter à son environnement urbain. Des projets seront présentés par différents architectes et le meilleur sera retenu.

«Si l'on commence maintenant la construction, ce musée pourrait ouvrir ses portes en l'an 2000», prédit Sherifa Hind Nasser. «Pour l'instant, tout dépend d'un prêt japonais d'environ 20 millions de dollars. Le Japon contribue au développement touristique jordanien et nous avons été ravis d'apprendre qu'il se montrait très intéressé par ce projet». Pour Sherifa Hind Nasser, la création de ce musée est essentielle. «Cela nous permettra d'apprendre beaucoup sur notre propre passé. Et en rassemblant passé et présent, ce musée devrait nous permettre de mieux envisager notre avenir».

Mona Qudus

Découverte

Aux sources arabes du droit humanitaire

Si la création d'organismes chargés de faire respecter le droit humanitaire date de ce siècle, les origines de ce droit sont elles bien plus anciennes et sont très présentes dans la mythologie arabe.

Une des sources

du droit international humanitaire - codifié dans les quatre conventions de Genève (1949) et ses protocoles additionnels (1977) - peut être identifiée dans l'héritage historique et culturel du monde arabe. Les traditions chevaleresques arabes et la loi de l'islam contiennent des principes éthiques qui ont longtemps régi la conduite des armées, anticipant ainsi d'un millénaire la conception contemporaine de la protection des victimes civiles et militaires.

La délégation égyptienne du Comité international de la Croix Rouge (CICR) - gardien et promoteur du droit international humanitaire - a mis sur pied ces dernières années une cellule de recherches s'intéressant aux éléments préfigurant ce droit présents dans la conscience collective arabe, à travers de textes sacrés ou de traditions orales.

L'année passée, ce travail s'est concentré sur l'imagerie et le folklore arabe, et a abouti à la réalisation d'un calendrier très original pour 1997, qui réunit à la fois les vers d'une œuvre artistique et documentaire.

La publication des textes folkloriques, chansons de geste et contes poétiques, est illustrée par un ensemble d'œuvres nées ayant résisté au temps: peintures sur verre et lithographies populaires personnalisant les héros et les protagonistes de ces récits», explique

Roland Huguénin, chef de la délégation du CICR au Caire. Des lithographies populaires colorées datant du début du siècle sont ici publiées pour la première fois. Quant à la peinture sur verre (l'art du Moudhab), elle est représentée par des œuvres venant de Syrie, d'Égypte et de Tunisie, et qui, par le passé, décoraient les murs des cafés et des échoppes de barbiers, tailleurs et cordonniers.

Pour M. Huguénin, une question se posait: les valeurs, principes et préceptes qui foisonnent dans l'imagerie collective arabe peuvent-ils être considérés comme les ancêtres du droit international humanitaire? Le résultat des recherches entreprises confirme la forte présence dans l'héritage culturel arabe d'une morale s'opposant aux pratiques jugées inhumaines.

Cette sensibilité s'appuie sur des héros comme Abou Zeid et Hilali, Antara et Aaby, Ali el Zebeq (le vif argent), le prince Saïf Ben Zi Yazan, le roi Zaher Beibars, Fatma, héros qui jouissent d'une aura de probité.

Les histoires de Mar Guirguis (Saint-Georges), du chanteur Hassan, amoureux de Naima, ou de Zir Salem, dénoncent des actes de violence, trahison, félonie, perfidie ou lâche vengeance, qui sont commis contre des victimes sans défense. «Restera-t-il au fils d'Adam quelque honneur ou quelque renommée s'il dé-

gaine le fer pour tuer un homme désarmé? Pourrait-il en tirer gloire, ou appeler cela victoire?» se demande l'auteur d'un de ces contes.

Un autre narrateur anonyme raconte lui comment Handala el Akili s'abandonna sur la terre des Hilali quand le hameau d'Abou Zeid et Hilali était vide de combattants, tant les vieillards et capturant femmes et enfants. Dans l'histoire d'Antara et Habla, le conteur décrit le regard inhumain et la vengeance scélérate des Beni Kanda qui, après avoir été battus sur le champ de bataille, s'en prennent à une caravane de femmes et d'enfants. La morale est claire. «Se battre d'homme à homme est un honneur», mais les combats ne doivent pas «concerner les femmes et les enfants». Cette nette distinction entre objectifs militaires et civils constitue aujourd'hui la base du droit humanitaire.

Dans le conte des commerçants et du roi Zaher Beibars, l'opinion publique soutient le droit des civils en territoire libre ou sous occupation. Les parties en conflit doivent s'abstenir d'entraver le commerce, de s'attaquer aux maisons et autres édifices civils. La belle légende du grimoire du Nil et du prince Saïf Ben Zi Yazan, l'homme aux mille prouesses et à l'immense pouvoir, fait allusion au droit fondamental de l'eau.

«Comment Saïf Arad peut-il priver les gens de l'eau, élément vital?» se demande le conteur qui explique la morale de son récit d'une manière très convaincante: «la goutte d'eau ne saurait devenir une arme. Il ne faudrait en aucun cas priver les humains et faire couler les larmes, car l'eau est un droit ab-



solu et certain, comme l'air: le soleil ou le rire des bambins».

Hors du champ de bataille, les combattants blessés ou capturés doivent eux aussi être protégés. Le récit du martyr de Saint Georges est une plaidoirie pour le respect des prisonniers et une dénonciation de tout mauvais traitement. «La prison est une souffrance en soi, et c'est bien assez, que la privation de liberté».

Le droit à un procès équitable constitue lui le thème de l'histoire d'Ali le vif argent et de la princesse Fatma, prête à condamner à mort «sans procès ni jugement» le traître Kassem. Ali le vif-argent, défenseur des opprimés, exprime son désaccord avec la décision de la princesse. «Juge-le et prouve ce que tu dis. Après cela, il méritera d'être puni».

Une justice équitable que le droit humanitaire international ne cesse aujourd'hui de réclamer pour les vaincus des conflits qui éclatent un peu partout sur la planète.

Anca de Maio

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Chanson

A la fois comédienne et chanteuse, Françoise Le Golvan propose un spectacle mêlant des chansons populaires anciennes avec ses propres compositions. Sur scène, elle est accompagnée par François Verly, percussionniste de jazz. Le 23 février à 20h30: conférence/spectacle au Centre culturel et de coopération linguistique (CCCL). Le 25 à 20h30: concert au Centre culturel royal. Le 26 à 18h00: concert à Irbid, à l'université du Yarmouk.

Peinture

Amanda Shedadah, jusqu'au 6 mars, au CCCL.

Cinéma

Fin du cycle «Polar» consacré aux films policiers. Le 24 février à 20h30 au CCCL. Regardez les hommes tomber, de Jacques Audiard (1994).

Communiqué

Le service commercial de l'Ambassade de France à Amman et l'Agence française de l'Ingénierie touristique, sous le patronage du ministère jordanien du Tourisme et des Antiquités et le ministère français de l'Équipement, du Logement, des Transports et du Tourisme, organisent les 22 et 23 février des Rencontres professionnelles sur l'ingénierie française et les équipements hôteliers.

Cette manifestation se déroulera à l'hôtel Philadelphie de 10h00 à 14h00 et de 16h00 à 19h00. La délégation française comprendra treize entreprises qui viendront exposer les dernières technologies françaises dans les domaines de l'ingénierie touristique et des équipements hôteliers. L'entrée est gratuite. Pour plus de renseignements, veuillez appeler le service commercial de l'Ambassade de France. Tel: 644.570642.379.

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Afin de mieux connaître son lectorat et de répondre à ses attentes, le Jourdain lance une enquête auprès de ses lecteurs avec le concours de la librairie Philadelphi. Pendant trois semaines, le questionnaire ci-dessous sera publié dans la page française du Star. Le 11 mars, un des questionnaires renvoyés au Star sera tiré au sort et l'heureux vainqueur se verra remettre pour 50 dinars de livres en français. Vous pouvez renvoyer le questionnaire à cette adresse: The Star, Enquête Le Jourdain, P.O. Box 9313, Amman.

Nom: _____ Activité: _____
Nationalité: _____ Age: _____ Téléphone: _____

Lisez-vous régulièrement le Jourdain (précisez la fréquence)?

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Souhaitez-vous trouver dans le Jourdain plus d'informations sur la France ou bien préférez-vous un traitement en français de l'actualité jordanienne?

Préférez-vous trouver une traduction à côté des articles en français?

Si oui, une traduction en quelle langue, arabe ou anglais?

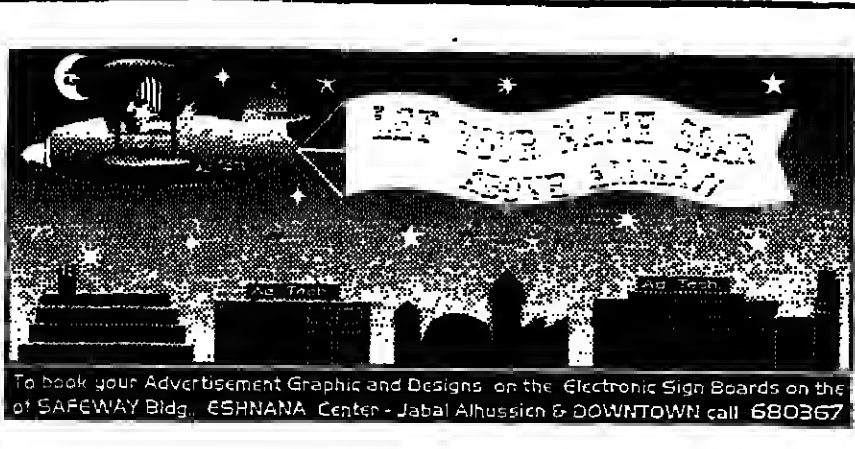
فكرنا من اننا صلي

UN appeals for \$120 million
Continued from page 1
The United Nations has appealed for \$120 million to help the Sudanese government in its fight against the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the south. The UN says the SPLA has been responsible for the deaths of thousands of people and the displacement of millions. The UN says it needs the money to buy weapons and ammunition to help the government forces. The UN says it will continue to provide humanitarian aid to the people of the Sudan.

Islamists divided over joining government
Continued from page 1
The Islamic Front, a coalition of Islamist groups, is divided over whether to join the government. Some members want to join, while others want to remain in the opposition. The group is currently in talks with the government, but no agreement has been reached yet.

Activities

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Baladna Art Gallery	657132	Jordan Bridge Club	676990
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		R.S.C.N.	837931/837937



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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 648298 or email us at Star@NETS.COM.JO with your news and views.

Electronic mail's increasing popularity: Are you still using 'snail' mail?

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

BUSINESS PEOPLE in older times had less crowded business cards than ours: they only needed to put a mailing address. The cards however, kept on witnessing new entrants, namely: The telephone, the telegraph, the telex and the fax.

While this has certainly contributed to better and more effective communications in doing business, it nevertheless made life more difficult for the graphic designers who had to cope with squeezing more letters into the small sized business cards.

The Internet's technology is cornering the graphic designers even further: now they have to deal with the latest entrant onto the business cards: the email address.

Email's increasing popularity is making the sight of long email addresses of the type abbassi@nets.com.jo, a familiar sight on the cards of technically-inclined people.

Electronic Mail (Email) is one of the Internet's most useful services as it allows for a fast and cost effective method of sending messages and all sorts of computer files to any destination in the world, provided of course the recipient also has an email address.

As gaining access to an email address only entails a small investment in a computer, a modem and an account

opened with a provider of Internet service. Email's utilization in the world is growing exponentially.

Email fares well when compared to the traditional ways of doing business correspondence. Whereas regular mail takes a very long time and entails the extra costs of paper, envelopes and stamps, email practically eliminates all of these extra costs. Of course regular mail may have the advantage of a warm

documents and Excel sheets to be opened and edited by the recipient further into the scale towards it. Furthermore, the use of email also provides a convenient way of sending faxes (a way to communicate with people who haven't obtained an email account yet).

The use of email to send faxes usually results in a lower fax bill as the email message travels in the form of an email message, until it reaches a fax gateway nearest to the destination to which it is to be faxed, hence reducing the cost of faxing. A popular service of this sort on the Internet is the Faxway service which is utilized by Global One / Sprint Jordan and NETS.

The use of email in the office could easily be incorporated to the filing and referencing methods used by the company in faxes and ordinary mail. This allows for streamlining business correspondence via email in the same manner that

correspondence is performed through faxes.

So, just as a regular mail message or a fax message takes a reference number and is filed accordingly, email messages can be given reference numbers by their authors and can be filed on computers as well as in printed form in the archives.

The availability of many network software solutions that utilize email, also makes it possible for people within an organization to communicate among one another, through

what is known as 'local mail'. This streamlines their internal communications as well as provides the users with access to international email over the Internet.

Email's advantages have resulted in a sharp increase in its popularity, which should ensure that nobody will be stuck with traditional, so-called 'snail' mail. It's just a matter of time before everybody switches to the fast email route. ■

email: Abbassi@NETS.COM.JO



Build your own, personal 'Web' page on Primus BBS: Creatively serving and educating users

COMPUTER NETWORKING Services (CNS), the company that owns and manages Primus BBS, has been hard at work in the past months since the launch of Primus to ensure that it lives up to user expectations.

Apparently, all it takes is to log into Primus to find out that there is a whole world of graphical wonders, coupled with audio, that brings Jordanian BBS users so close to the real top of the Internet.

On top of that, Primus has introduced a number of ideas to stimulate even more user interactivity.

A bright example on this is

an initiative by which Primus allows its users to design their own HTML-based pages, just as if they were creating their own Web sites.

The personal pages—also referred to as 'Web' pages although they are actually Primus pages—have caught on so well, that several users can be found on-line, into the early hours of the morning, developing their pages and working hard at impressing other users with innovations.

Some pages, in particular, stand out among the rest. These include pages created by Nabil Kilany, Mutaz Abu Ghazaleh, Mohammad Ansari and Na'el Barghouti.

What's more, Primus staff maintain personal interaction with users on a daily basis, exchanging tips and pointers on Web page design and other 'technicalities'.

"This is what we call client service," stated Mr. Amer Naseridin, marketing manager at CNS.

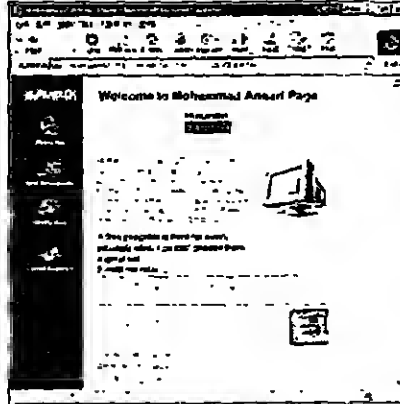


The Primus main page

"Don't listen to us, listen to our customers. We've got so many remarks on-line, praising our efforts to deliver all that is new," added Mr. Naseridin.

One thing is for sure, all these developments at Primus are raising the level of services available to on-line users in Jordan. The exciting ideas being applied at Primus, coupled with user interaction, are creating more awareness and ensuring that local users get a serious taste of what BBS users worldwide enjoy.

For more information on Primus, contact CNS at telephone number 614755. ■



A 'personal user page' on Primus

News update

Easy Arabic OCR from OmniPage

For Arabic computer users looking for an effective optical character recognition, Care software has introduced the Arabic version of its well-known package, OmniPage. What makes OmniPage stand out is its ease-of-use, as it doesn't require any previous training. Also, and based on press reviews, the recognition results it provides are

well above 95 percent, which is quite impressive for an Arabic OCR package.

For more information on OmniPage, contact Kemet Corporation in Egypt at telephone ++ 202 2917529 or Aptec in Saudi Arabia at telephone ++ 966 1 4881914.

Microsoft Windows CE

Microsoft has announced its plans to introduce a special version of Windows for

hand-held devices whether computers, mobile phones, or even miniature television units.

The new product is to be called Windows CE and will allow cross-communication between the above mentioned devices running Windows and personal computers.

'Al Jadeed', the Arabic edition of Popular Science magazine

ARABIAN COMMUNICATIONS & Publishing (ACP) have introduced 'Al-Jadeed', the Arabic edition of the well-known American magazine, Popular Science. 'Al-Jadeed' lives up to the standards of its American parent, packing exciting and very varied news on technology and general consumer items. 'Al-Jadeed' will be available on the market in March 1997. Look out for it. ■



Baggio has unhappy 30th birthday



ROME—AC Milan striker Roberto Baggio turned 30 Tuesday but told reporters he had little to celebrate with coach Arrigo Sacchi keeping him nailed to the substitutes' bench.

The former Italian international, who struggled with injury at the start of the season, said he wanted to meet Milan chairman Silvio Berlusconi to discuss why he was not playing.

"I can accept being kept on the bench, but only if there is a reason. (Sacchi) must have the courage to tell me the truth," Baggio said.

Baggio did not play in Milan's Serie A match Sunday against Bologna and has played only 13 league games this season out of a possible 20.

"I do not feel old at 30...physically I've never felt better," Baggio said. "I cannot bear it when a coach pays me compliments all the week saying that I am working very well and then puts me on the bench Sunday."

"At the moment I feel like a Ferrari being driven by a traffic warden."

Italian newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport said Tuesday Baggio was in contact two weeks ago with Spanish team Real Madrid, coached by former Milan manager Fabio Capello.

"I don't know yet whether I will stay at Milan or whether I will leave. The only thing I want is to play. If Capello calls me, I'll go to Spain," Baggio was quoted as saying.

The "Divine Ponytail" joined Capello's Milan at the start of the 1995/96 season from current world club champions Juventus.

Baggio was European footballer of the year in 1993. He missed a penalty-shootout when Italy, coached by Sacchi, lost to Brazil in the World Cup final in Los Angeles in 1994. ■

FIFA president recommends Beckenbauer as successor

ZURICH—Joao Havelange, the President of FIFA, said Tuesday that Franz Beckenbauer would appear to be an ideal candidate to succeed him in his post in 1998.

The 80-year-old Brazilian, in his post for the last 23 years, announced last December he would not stand for another term after the World Cup in France next year.

However, he is known to not enjoy close relations with Lennart Johansson, the President of UEFA, who is the leading candidate at the moment, despite his tendency to commit gaffes.

"He is the only candidate at the moment," was the lukewarm response by Havelange to Johansson's candidacy.

Havelange, though, was effusive about Beckenbauer, currently President of UEFA Cup holders Bayern Munich, standing as a candidate.

"Beckenbauer was a great player, a wonderful coach, a successful businessman and president of one of the great footballing powers in Europe. So why shouldn't he be a candidate as he has all the requirements to do the job," Havelange told AFP.

Havelange's enthusiastic support for Beckenbauer has been echoed by one of the Brazilian autocrat's bitterest enemy's, Pele, the former Brazilian master and minister of sport.

"Havelange also confirmed that he would not reconsider standing again even if the candidates to replace him did not meet with his approval."

"I took this decision after a lot of thought. Despite my good health, both physically and financially, I will be 82 in 1998 and one just doesn't know at that age what might happen. One's star can suddenly decline," Havelange said. ■



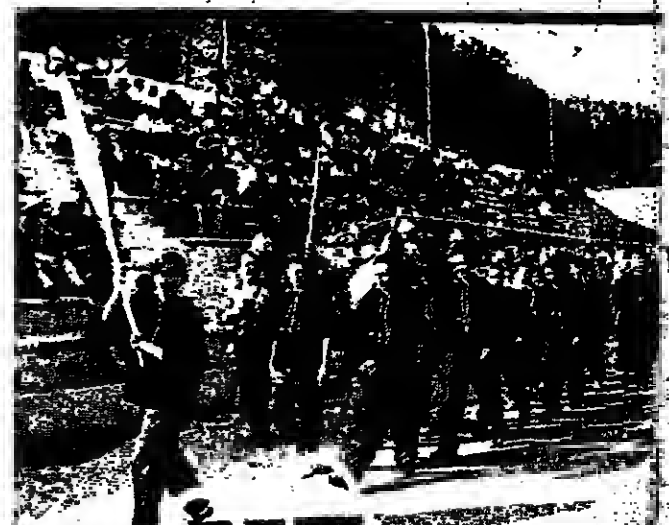
Michael Jordan quenches his thirst with a Gatorade after successfully overcoming a wall of challenges in his newest Gatorade commercial, debuting this month during the NBA All-Star Game. (Feature Photo Service)

Jordan's Open Swimming Tournament A new Jordanian swimming record in IM 200 meters

By Jawad Abbassi
Special to The Star

WHILE JORDAN is still somewhat far from being on the world's map for swimming, it nevertheless is making confident strides towards improving the situation of sports. The Open Swimming Tournament held on February 15 and 16 is the most recent step taken by Jordan's Swimming Federation towards encouraging the swimming activities in the Kingdom. Swimmers from Jordan's three swimming clubs of the Sports City, Al Ahli and the Orthodox as well as swimmers not enrolled in any club, swam for the gold in a total of 22 races for all age and sex groups. The races included the whole suite of Free, Butterfly, Backstroke, Breast Stroke and IM styles.

The Tournament, held in the Orthodox Club's winter pool, saw promising signs of improvement the most prominent of which was the setting of a new Jordanian record in the 200 meters IM style by the young and aspiring Andre Khoury. The race saw intense competition between Khoury



and the older and more experienced Amer Al Wazani, however Khoury managed to snatch victory at the end and broke the Jordanian record by three seconds with his new time of 2:33 minutes. The old record was held by Amer's brother, Ali Wazani.

"It feels great to win a race against such a more experienced swimmer as Amer," said The 16-year-old Khoury—who ranks as number six among Arab swimmers of his age group—after setting the new record. "My ambition is to continually improve my swimming techniques and eventually qualify to and represent Jordan in the Olympic 2000 in Sydney. My deep thanks go to my two competent trainers in the national team and the Orthodox club: Ali Nawas and Khamees Ghaieth." ■

Williams to continue with Renault

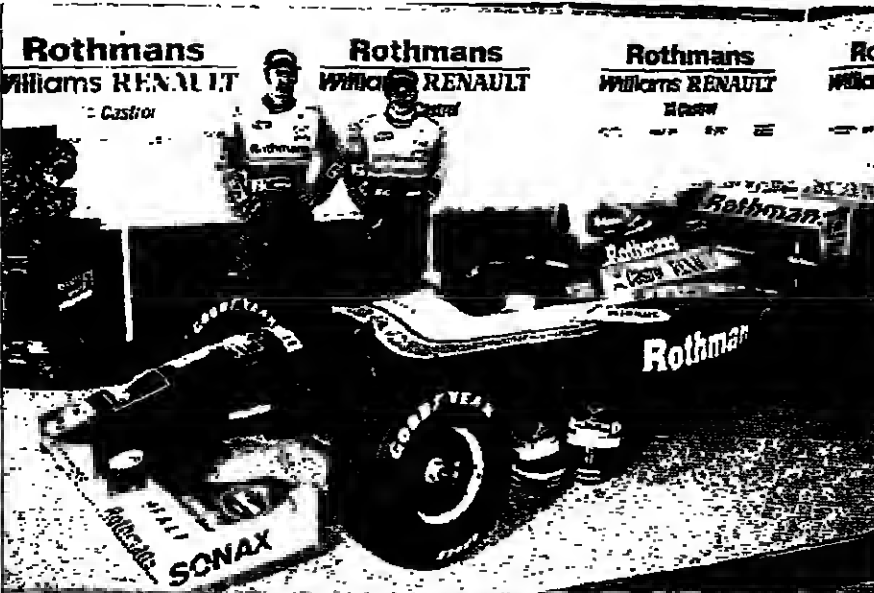
THE WORLD championship-winning Rothmans Williams Renault team will continue to be powered by Renault engines for at least two more years, although the French engine manufacturer announced they were pulling out of Formula One racing at the end of this season. Renault have agreed to sell their engines and technical knowledge to the French company Mecachrome, who will supply Williams with V10 Renault engines in 1998 and 1999.

"It is wonderful news for Williams I can assure you of that," said Frank Williams, managing director of Williams Grand Prix Engineering. "Also, I think it is very, very good news for Formula One."

"After an end to its participation in Formula One competition and to avoid wasting the technical expertise it has acquired, Renault Sport has decided to sell its know-how in the area of Formula One engines to the French company Mecachrome. This company is special-

ized, among other things, in assembling and tuning Formula One engines and has been a loyal partner of Renault Sport for 22 years. Mecachrome will develop these engines for its own use and under its own name and will offer them to racing teams in 1998. The Williams team has already signed a contract with Mecachrome to supply engines in 1998 and 1999. Renault said in a statement last week.

Last season the Williams Renault team regained the World Constructors' Championship and finished first and second in the World Drivers' Championship with Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve. ■



Palestinian money market

Release prisoner signals thaw in relations between Jordan and Kuwait

Weather Outlook

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